

Fall 1994

Volume 20, No. 3



205

\$3.50

Non Profit Bipad: 65498

# GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

**Dear Ryan,  
First of all, I want  
to thank you for  
the courage you  
have shown play-  
ing the part of a  
homosexual teen-  
ager. Especially in  
this day and age  
when discrimina-  
tion and violence  
against gays is on  
the rise.**

story on page 5



# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND FRIENDS

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

Dear reader,

Thank you for helping to make the new *Gay Community News* possible. We think you'll love this issue and we think you'll agree that no other paper in the country brings you the stories we do.

GCN is committed to publishing the best queer progressive paper in the country. We know our movements desperately need the forum GCN provides—a space for our conversations about sexual liberation, racial and economic justice, and feminist politics. But we also know that we can't continue indefinitely without greater financial support. This issue was produced and GCN is currently operating with only one paid staff administrator. If you haven't recently subscribed or sent a contribution, please do it now. And tell all your friends! (Contributions are tax-deductible.) Let us know that a one-of-a-kind paper like GCN can make it in the '90s. Many subscribers and supporters have asked us to clarify the status of their subscriptions. So...here's the scoop:

- 1) The new GCN honors all subscriptions to the old paper. If you subscribed before we suspended publication in July of 1992, you will continue to receive the paper for the duration of your subscription. Our current publication plan calls for quarterly issues for the remainder of 1994 and monthly issues to begin in 1995. Under this new schedule, featuring an expanded format for each issue, you will receive 1 issue for every 4 you would have received when the paper came out in the smaller, weekly format. Please check the address label on your subscription for the number of issues remaining. (If you have not already received a special issue for the 1993 March on Washington, the "Race, Class, Sex" Issue of fall 1993, plus the double-issue for Stonewall 1994, please contact us.)  
We thank you for your loyalty, patience and unflagging support during this reorganization period. If you can, we hope you will consider making an additional contribution to the paper or renewing your subscription early.
- 2) If you subscribed after the July 1992 suspension of publication, you will receive 10 packed issues of GCN per yearly subscription. Our publication schedule calls for quarterly issues through the remainder of 1994, with monthly issues to begin in 1995. Check the address label on your paper for the number of issues remaining.
- 3) If you have not yet subscribed to *Gay Community News*, this is the time to join us. For \$35, you'll get the most arousing piece of reading material around!

All of us working to keep GCN coming out to you, and all of us working to rebuild our parent-organization, the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, thank you again for your support.

The Board of Directors of *Gay Community News* &  
The Bromfield Street Educational Foundation

**Editors:** Marla Erlien & Stephanie Poggi

**Co-ordinator:** Marla Erlien

**Copy Editors:** Sarah Grant, Tom Huth &  
John Gordon

**Ad Co-ordinator:** John Gordon

**Art Direction:** Tom Huth

**Design & Production:** Blue Period.

**Illustrators:** Jennifer Camper, Jean Vallon &  
Sherry Edwards

**BSEF Administrator:** John Gordon

**The Board of Directors**

**Bromfield Street Educational Foundation:**

Urvashi Vaid, Stephanie Poggi, Joyce Kauffman,  
Ed Hunt, Art Cohen, Judy Andler, J.W. Maxie Jr.,  
Andrea de Majewski, De Larson

GCN, 25 West Street, Boston, MA 02111

Telephone: (617) 426-4469

© October 1994

Bromfield Street Educational Foundation

ISSN: (0147-0728)

Cover Photo: Ann Limongello, ABC

Advertisements do not reflect editorial endorsement.

## contents

<b>Letters</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>QueerWorld</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>e-mail bytes</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Bigot Busters</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Coming Out On the Soaps</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Larry Gross</b>	
<b>Wake Up and Smell the Lubricant</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Susie Day</b>	
<b>Disarming Hostile Majorities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Binny Miller</b>	
<b>Tribute to Siong Huat Chua</b>	<b>11</b>

<b>speaking out:</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Movement at a Crossroads</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Harry Hay</b>	
<b>Children and Gay Liberation</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Deeg</b>	
<b>ILGA Dumps NAMBLA</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Jennie McKnight</b>	
<b>When is a Dildo a Hotdog</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Cindy Rizzo</b>	
<b>Queer and Present Danger</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Michael Bronski</b>	
<b>Book Reviews</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Andrea Freud Loewenstein</b>	



# Letters

## Responses to "AIDS Goes Union": Understanding Unions, Class and Power

Dear GCN,

As longtime lesbian and union activists, we were extremely disappointed to read the recent article you published on AIDS organizations and unions. We could, of course, argue to death about what "really" happened in each of the workplaces that Rigoglioso describes. Our main concern, however, lies with the framework and political perspective exhibited throughout the entire piece.

When we first read this article we thought that it belonged in *Bay Windows*, (a center to right gay paper in Boston) but after reading it a second time, we realized that where it really belongs is the "Living Section" of the *Boston Globe*. The "Living Section" describes people and issues in a chatty, semi-informative kind of way, without taking any particular stand on any issue. "AIDS Goes Union" reminds us of such a piece. We were surprised to see this article in GCN — an article which views class and economic justice through such liberal and/or "neutral" lenses. We would be equally surprised to read articles in GCN discussing the pros and cons of racial justice, the pros and cons of feminism, the pros and cons of the Log Cabin Club.

This is not to say that we don't support critical journalism or analysis, but Rigoglioso's piece shows such a complete misunderstanding of unions, of class, and of power in the workplace that it's hard to even imagine how one would get to an analytical place in the context of his piece. Instead of placing his article in the context of power inequities existent in the workplace and an understanding of why people unionize and what a union legally can and can not do, Rigoglioso spews forth typical myths and fears that management uses in *every unionization campaign*! Imagine our surprise to read as fact in a GCN article the same kinds of anti-union propaganda that appear in every organizing campaign we have been part of.

When workers decide to unionize (typically in response to some major problems in the workplace), they must get a majority of workers to sign union cards and/or vote in an election. Workers form an Organizing Committee (OC) whose responsibility it is to talk to every worker in the workplace about the union. The union staff person works with the OC to assist in training, education, leadership development, etc.

During the time prior to the election, management typically hires an anti-union consultant to develop a management campaign to beat the union. Management's campaign includes but is not limited to creating divisions between various parts of the workforce, telling workers they will have to go out on strike if they go union, creating a myth that the clients (the students, the teachers, etc.) will suffer if the workers are unionized, linking unions to the mafia, and presenting the union as a third party rather than an internal organization. The primary responsibility of the union staff person is to prepare the OC for management's anti-union campaign. One way we've approached this is to pass out

copies of anti-union literature from previous union campaigns. Then when the OC receives literature from their own employer saying almost exactly the same thing as what they had previously been given, the workers realize that what management is saying is not new but is part of a standard management anti-union strategy to discourage workers from unionizing.

Under Reagan/Bush, the National Labor Relations Board, which governs all union elections in the private sector, was weakened. Today, workers have little legal recourse to respond to management campaign tactics. Management is legally allowed to lie in an anti-union campaign, there is no law that requires them to only tell the truth. In addition management has unlimited access to workers during a union drive. In campaigns we have been part of, management has sent letters to workers on a daily basis, held captive audience meetings with each department, shown anti-union films and held one-on-one meetings between supervisors and workers — all with the goal of pressuring workers to not support the union. And management has been known to spend a phenomenal amount of money on anti-union campaigns (which in AIDS Service Organizations such as GMHC could have been better used for AIDS care, AIDS education, etc.) The pressure to vote NO in a union election is endless and intense.

Anyone who has worked in a place where there has been a union drive knows that it is not an easy time. Management does not respond well to workers wanting a voice in workplace decisions, and they will fight tooth and nail to keep the union out.

And once a workforce unionizes, it is not realistic to assume that all the problems will go away. A union is only as strong as its members, and once a group of employees wins a union election their work has only just begun. If management was active in trying to keep the union out, and has a reputation of being unfair in the first place, there is no reason to believe that they will be any better when negotiating a first contract. A recent statistic states that only 40% of all winning union elections go on to win a first contract, the remaining 60% never successfully negotiate a contract because management fights so hard. In these workplaces the union is ultimately decertified.

As Rigoglioso notes, there will indeed be battles between management and staff in a unionized workplace. We, however, don't view those battles as negative. Having a union means workers have the legal right to engage in those battles without fear of firing or recrimination. Having a union means workers have the right to negotiate over workplace concerns. Not having a union means management has the final say over all workplace issues, and that the staff has no legal mechanism to disagree or voice their opinions or demands. Having a union means sharing power — something that management doesn't agree to without a union, and something that must be fought for even with a union.

And what about the issue of volunteers? Rigoglioso states that a major fear of unionizing is that the union will force all ASOs to cut out their volunteer base. We work with unionized hospital workers throughout the state of Massachusetts, and all we can say is that every hospital we represent has a volunteer services department, candy strippers, etc. which play an important function in the hospital. Would the union agree to the large-scale elimination of paid jobs and their replacement with volunteer positions? Unlikely. It is also doubtful that any of us would want our jobs to be eliminated in favor of volunteers. If management wanted to cut staff positions in a unionized setting, they would put their proposal on the table and then negotiate with the workers over this process. Although Rigoglioso paints the union as an outside third party which can arbitrarily impose workrules, the ultimate power of any union is with the people in the workplace. It is the workers themselves who must stand behind their own position on such issues as lay-offs, bargaining, benefits, and striking. At a time in this country when full-time jobs are being replaced with part-time jobs without benefits, when decent paying jobs are disappearing, when technology is replacing people, it is important to have an organized voice saying "enough is enough."

While it can be argued that the labor movement has a long way to go in terms of its own stands on many issues, it is important to recognize that organized labor has played a critical role in securing many rights that most people take for granted — such as the 8 hour work day, the 5 day work week, child labor laws, social security, public education, affirmative action, health and safety standards, maternity leave and most recently the Family and Medical Leave Act. It is also important to note that union shops were the first workplaces in the country to win domestic partnership — and it wasn't won because management put it on the table, but because lesbian and gay unionized workers fought for it.

Within the labor movement each union operates differently. Some unions have become very involved in fighting discrimination against lesbian/gay/bi and HIV+ workers and in funding large-scale AIDS education efforts. Even more important, however, is the fact that thousands of lesbian/gay/bi workers are union staff, elected union officers and rank and file union activists. Over two hundred lesbian/gay/bi union members from across the country and Europe recently gathered in New York City for a founding convention of a National Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Labor Organization. As we listened to stories from different conference participants it became clear that those of us in attendance were testimony to the space within organized labor for lesbian/gay/bi participation, and to the tremendous distance unions must still go to treat all lesbian/gay/bi members with the respect and dignity that all workers deserve.

continued on page 30



# QueerWorld

## Quotable

*"It was a joke, something that just crossed my mind...I thought people had a better sense of humor."*—Argentina's top Roman Catholic cardinal, Antonio Quarracino, explaining his suggestion that homosexuals should be put in a ghetto.

According to *Reuters*, Quarracino told a television interviewer on August 23 that he was sorry for the remarks he had made earlier in the week, including his characterization of gay people as an "ignoble stain" on the face of society. Even though he was just kidding, the cardinal said, "I apologize if I offended anyone, if I hurt someone's sensitivities."

Argentinian gay men and lesbians said they were preparing to sue Quarracino for his recommendation that the country find "a large area for gays and lesbians to live in, with their own laws, their own media...and even their own constitution...[This would remove] an ignoble stain from the face of society."

### Zapatista Convention Passes Gay Platform

**CHIAPAS, Mexico**—The Zapatista movement for human rights, democracy, and justice for indigenous people has incorporated gay rights demands into its official platform. The planks were proposed by sixteen lesbian and gay activists who attended the Zapatista National Democratic Convention held here in August. All planks were approved without controversy by the 7,000 delegates.

"Some convention delegates were surprised, but there were no arguments against us during the assembly," said Tijuana gay activist Alejandro Garcia. "It was a climate of equality and brotherhood. In a situation like that, when someone is homophobic, no one will support him." Garcia added that, "The most important result is that our ideas were disseminated. Many people with very little knowledge of the gay movement now have heard a lot more about it."

Seventy leaders of Mexican gay groups had gathered in Mexico City before the convention to draw up their platform. Demands included a national anti-discrimination law, improved education on homosexuality in schools, appointment of gay men and lesbians to government positions, a government campaign against homophobia, and unbiased AIDS education.

Other aims of the convention included proposing a new Mexican constitution, preparing demands of Mexico's new president, and continuing discussion of the Zapatista effort to bring basic services, land rights and political freedom to their state and the rest of Mexico. An indigenous women's petition was included in Zapatista demands issued on March 1 of this year. The planks included demands for improved health care, day care services, adequate food for children, and better education for women.

### Lesbian Launches Transkei Gay Group

**UMTATA, Transkei, South Africa**—A lesbian who was lashed as a teenager for saying she was gay has organized the first lesbian/gay rights group in the Transkei region, formerly a Black homeland. "There has been no single moment in my life where I have felt good about myself," said founder Vera Vimbela. "I thought we should start changing peo-

ple, changing attitudes, making people proud to be who they are."

According to the *Weekly Mail* and *Guardian* newspaper, Lesbians and Gays in Transkei has seven members.

### Chiapas Leader Marcos Identifies with all

In April, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published an interview with EZLN leader Sub-Commandante Marcos which included his statement that he had once worked in a restaurant in San Francisco, but had been fired for being gay. The pro-government press in Mexico picked up the story to smear him, so Marcos issued a communique in response. The *S. F. Chronicle* printed an excerpt from his communique:

"About whether Marcos is homosexual: Marcos is gay in San Francisco, Black in South Africa, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a gang member in Neza, a rocker in the National University, a Jew in Germany, an ombudsman in the Defense Ministry, a communist in the post-Cold War era, an artist without gallery or portfolio.... A pacifist in Bosnia, a housewife alone on Saturday night in any neighborhood in any city in Mexico, a striker in the CTM, a reporter writing filler stories for the back pages, a single woman on the metro at 10pm, a peasant without land, an unemployed worker... an unhappy student, a dissident amid free market economics, a writer without books or readers, and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains of southeast Mexico. So Marcos is a human being, any human being, in this world. Marcos is all the exploited, marginalized and oppressed minorities, resisting and saying, 'Enough!'"

### Lesbian Transgenderists Kicked out of Australian Festival

**BRISBANE**—Lesbian separatists forced organizers to eject male-to-female transsexuals from the National Lesbian Confest held here in August. According to *Queensland Pride*, a local gay paper, approximately 80 separatist women surrounded members of the Brisbane Confest Collective during an opening event and threatened their personal safe-

ty if the lesbian transgenderists were not kicked out.

"I was aware of some of the backlash we would get, having worked around women who identified very solidly with separatist beliefs, [but] the ferocity of it was really unexpected," said festival organizer Gai Lemon.

### We Won't Ask...And Please God, Don't Tell

**TIJUANA**—Prior to the August 21 presidential elections in Mexico, Tijuana newspaper *Zeta* asked the three candidates if they would include gay people in their cabinet. Center-right PRI candidate Ernesto Zedillo, who won despite continuing allegations of fraud, responded like this, "Well, in Mexico, people are never asked what their situation is in this regard."

Leftist, PRD Party presidential candidate Cuauhtemoc Cardenas said, "I would not include anyone for the fact of being homosexual or for the fact of not being. I would be looking for people who can...fulfill the responsibility they've been handed. We will look for honor, we will look for ability, knowledge, character references, obligation to society. We also will not ask if they're Catholic, Protestant or if they do not have a religious tendency, or if they know how to speak English or French—this we're not going to ask."

Cardenas is believed to have been the legitimate winner of the 1988 presidential election when massive fraud handed victory to another PRI candidate, Salinas de Gortari.

The rightist PAN party candidate Diego Cevallos gave this answer to *Zeta's* question, "On purpose, no. To give a political spot to homosexuals and another to lesbians and another to asexuals and another to lovebirds, no. Politics is not a question of sex, it's about citizenship, and a citizen who is capable, a citizen who is honest, a citizen who is really useful in the job will be hired, and I'm not going to investigate their preferences...[O]n a TV program...a homosexual called and asked, if I won the presidency, what support would I give them, and I answered him—support, support, support, no."

### 'Proper Affair' for Pet Shop Boy

**LONDON**—Singer/musician Neil Tennant of Pet Shop Boys' fame came out in the August issue of the



# e-mail bytes

## Bigot Busters v. Religious Right: Bigot Busters Win



Bigot Buster Victory Party – Burning Anti-Gay Referendum Petitions July 1994.

British gay magazine, *Attitude*.

"In the '80s I realized that I probably was gay," said Tennant. "I mean, by then I knew what I was attracted to. But I didn't really have a proper affair with anyone until three or four years ago, really. For most of the '80s I was, well, not exactly celibate but not far from it."

Tennant added that the latest Pet Shop Boys album, "Very," was written from "the point of view of me being in love."

### In Poland, as Long as You Stay Away from Children...

**WARSAW**—A recent survey shows that the majority of citizens don't mind gay people all that much—as long as we stay away from children. According to the Polish Press Agency, Poland's Center for Public Opinion Surveying found that 62 percent of those surveyed would not mind working with a gay person and 68 percent wouldn't care if a gay person moved in next door.

However, the survey reveals the classic bias against gay contact with young people. Eighty-eight percent are opposed to gay people adopting children and 79 percent don't think gay men and lesbians should be teachers. Only 10 percent of those surveyed say they know a gay man or lesbian.

### And in Ontario They Said...

**TORONTO**—Close to 67 percent of people in the province of Ontario said gay people should not be allowed to adopt children, according to an Environics Research Group poll commissioned by the *Toronto Star*. Forty-eight percent still objected even if the adoptive parent is the lover of the child's biological parent.

The survey also found that half of Ontarians favor legal spousal rights for gay couples. The Ontario Parliament rejected domestic partner legislation earlier this year.

### Gay Safe Sex Ads Air In Britain

**LONDON**—Capital Gay reports that the Channel 4 Network here has funded and in August began airing two gay safe sex ads. Produced by the group Gay Men Fighting AIDS (GMFA), the first of the 30-second commercials features a "romantic fantasy  
*continued on page 25*

While the Religious Right threatened anti-gay initiatives in 10 states, from Maine to Oregon, only two, Oregon and Idaho, made it onto the November ballot. The reasons for their failure differ from place to place, but a phenomenon that deserves serious attention is the Bigot Busters in Washington State—"rapid-response teams that are dispatched to public locations where signatures are being gathered for the [anti-gay] initiatives." Gays/lesbians/queers and supporters met the opposition at the site where groups such as the Washington Public Affairs Council, a.k.a. "Committee for Equal Rights, Not Special Rights" or the Citizens Alliance of Washington were first confronting the public with their views on denying civil rights protections to gays and lesbians.

First created in Oregon, Bigot Busters became a crucial strategy for engaging people in face to face discussions about the dangers of curtailing the civil rights of gays and lesbians. Bigot Busters played a major role in successfully keeping Portland, Oregon's anti-gay initiative off the ballot; supporters failed to gain enough qualifying signatures.

Bigot Busters/Washington was formed by Queer Nation in February of this year. The idea of Bigot Busters' Decline to Sign campaign was to preempt two anti-gay initiatives, I-608 and I-610. Ballot measure 608 would have banned civil-rights laws protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination in employment and housing and prohibited public schools from presenting homosexuality as acceptable. Measure 610 would have banned adoptions by gays and lesbians, and prevented custody of children by divorced gay parents.

Initiative 610, backed by Oregon activist Lon Mabon, was more highly publicized, yet its backers acknowledged difficulty in gathering signatures. Initiative 608 was expected to collect the necessary 181,667 signatures—up until the deadline on July 8th.

### Talking At The Point Of Sale

The bigot buster strategy was ingenious. As Bigot Busters Co-Chair Patrick Hogan explained, "We talked  
*continued next page*



to people at the point of sale, so to speak, right as it's in their mind, so they wouldn't get only one side." Initiative backers out collecting signatures would entice people to sign on against "special rights" for gays. Decline to Sign supporters would be there to counter that what was at stake was equal rights under the law, not special rights. The *Seattle Times* quoted a discouraged initiative supporter: "They're waging an information war . . . and in some ways they're winning. An ordinary grandma would come up to me and say, 'You bigot.'"

The organization of Decline to Sign involved trained teams sent out to where 608/610 supporters were gathering signatures, alerted by dispatchers operating a hotline to which anyone could call in—from a mall, the ferry terminals, holiday events, etc. when signature gatherers were sighted. Decline to Sign teams were on call to be dispatched.

The official state-wide organization, Hands Off Washington (HOW), had raised considerable sums of money and was preparing their strategy for the moment the initiative was official. They refused to endorse Bigot Busters which worked independent from but not in opposition to HOW. One of HOW's county based groups did endorse the Don't Sign On campaign.

#### Whose Rights Are Denied?

By late June, it was clear that Bigot Busters were having a significant effect. *The Seattle Post-Intelligence* on June 29 quoted 608/610 leaders as saying, "Bigot Busters are persistent, confrontational, and intimidating....It's really forced us to go underground." After this story, a conservative radio talk show host asked his listeners to jam the Bigot Busters' hotline, accusing them of Nazi tactics, and

calling them "thugs, brutes and bandits" out to impede the democratic process. The phone lines became jammed, but what became clear was that those collecting signatures couldn't handle the debate. Initiative leaders were losing their volunteer base; they began offering 30 cents per signature to recruit petitioners.

In the final week, as the Initiative 608 campaign neared collecting its required number, their ability to gather signatures waned. They took out an ad in major newspapers saying, "Don't let bigotry, intolerance and intimidation deny your right to vote. Homosexual activists and other radical liberal groups are pulling out all the stops to deny citizens of Washington State their constitutional right to vote on Initiative 608." The ad goes on to claim that civil rights for queers will "dilute" those of other groups, that prohibiting mention of homosexuality in schools will keep the state "neutral," and to present a description of gay sexual activity—allegedly taken from school curricula—that was censored by all the state's major newspapers for being too graphic! Only one initiative supporter was spotted at July 4th events, while many bigot busters combed the state looking for sightings.

#### Accusations of Intimidation

Initiatives 608 and 610 failed to collect the required signatures. Within a week, leaders of Initiative 608 campaign met with the Secretary of State. Now accusations of harassment and intimidation took on legal proportions. The media had given credence to such charges throughout the campaign and when it came to formal charges being brought against the Bigot Busters by Initiative 608 leaders, they leapt prematurely to the validity of such charges.

By early August, the mainstream media claimed that "Secretary of State Munro said his informal probe of alleged intimidation and harassment by 'Bigot Busters' leaves no doubt in his mind that foes of two anti-gay rights initiatives violated the rights of the signature gathers." When the gay press pursued the story they got a very different report. *The Seattle Gay News* of August 12th quotes Assistant Secretary of State Stone Whiting, "We met with representatives from Bigot Busters and Initiative 608. Neither side ever offered any kind of evidence that Bigot Busters were involved in any kind of situation of harassment or interference."

No charges were ever filed. What remains is grand-standing by legislators who supported the initiatives. To keep alive the image of the "Gay Klux Klan" put forth by 608 leaders, legislators are proposing changes in current regulations guiding the initiative process. Proposals include legislation that restricts the right to debate at the site of signature gathering. According to the ACLU Director of Education, "The laws are clear and adequate, political debate is not interference, even heated political debate."

In some of the gay press, "news" stories reported the validity of the accusations of harassment backed up by the (mis)quotes from the Secretary of State—information they most likely compiled from AP wires. Perhaps the gay press should read the local gay press to get a better reading of the events.

(thanks to Richard Isaac, Bigot Buster, for keeping us informed)

## Out Write '95

March  
3 • 4 • 5  
1995

### THE FIFTH ANNUAL QUEER WRITERS' CONFERENCE

On the weekend of March 3-5, at Boston's Park Plaza Hotel, over 2,000 writers, editors, booksellers and readers will gather again to explore the creative and political issues facing our communities. Join us to see our history and our future being written!

The conference will feature keynote addressses from **TONY KUSHNER** and **LINDA VILLAROSA**. The Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture by **CHERRIE MORAGA**. Special Performance by **LUIS ALFARO**. Also over 70 panels, workshops, conversations, caucuses and networking sessions. And the now legendary **OUT IS IN** Dance Party!

Discount airfares available through Yankee Clipper Travel. Call Jim Boin at 1-800-624-2664 or (408) 354-6400. Special room rate available at the Park Plaza. Call 1-800-225-2008 or write Boston Park Plaza Hotel, 64 Arlington St., Boston, MA 02116.

Register before December 31 to receive a special rate of \$50. Registration will be \$55 after January 1, and \$60 at the door.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE AM/PM \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ REGISTRATION(S)

\_\_\_ Check Payable to Out Write '95 \_\_\_ Master Card \_\_\_ VISA Acct. Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

For more information call : (617) 426-4469. Send registration to: 25 West Street, Boston, MA 02111

Please indicate need for ASL Interpretation. Fully accessible.



# Coming Out On the Soaps:

## Letters to a Fictional Gay Teen

by Larry Gross

August 31, 1992

Dear Ryan,

First of all, I want to thank you for the courage you have shown playing the part of a homosexual teenager. Especially in this day and age when discrimination and violence against gays is on the rise.

As you act on *One Life to Live* as a gay teenager, I also act. I act as a straight, normal twenty one year old. It has become routine to act like the perfect son or brother. You are the first person I have ever told and may be the last, that I am gay. I don't think I will ever be able to tell anyone the truth. Had not your portrayal and this storyline of a gay teen hit me so deeply, I probably would not be telling you. Your character is so realistic and you do such a great job portraying how gay teens really feel. Recently, I saw phone numbers for gay youth in *Soap Opera Weekly* magazine. For those who are troubled about their sexuality. I honestly don't feel I have enough courage to call any of these places. For some reason, I think somehow, someone will find out. If my family or friends find out, I'm afraid they wouldn't look at me the same or would never love me as much as they do now.

I feel that way because of things I hear my family say about homosexuals. Until recently, I would laugh at jokes about gays or would pretend to dislike the way they were. I cannot and will not do that anymore. Now I just stay silent and try to ignore things that are said about gays and even AIDS itself. I overheard my father say that faggots started AIDS and normal people like Magic Johnson have to suffer for what gays have done. Well, do you think I could ever tell him that I am one of those who he thinks have caused normal people to suffer and die from AIDS. It's something I could never foresee.

I know this is just your job and I'm sorry for throwing all of my problems at you like this. I certainly don't expect you to solve any of them but it feels good just to tell someone... Thank you for your time.

In the summer of 1992 the daytime TV serial *One Life To Live* (OLTL) began what was to be the longest and most complex television narrative ever to deal with a lesbian or gay character. Billy Douglas is a high school student who has recently moved to Llanview (the fictional small town outside Philadelphia where OLTL takes place) and become a star athlete and class president. When Billy confides, first to his best friends and then to his minister, that he is gay, he sets off a series of plot twists that differ from the usual soap opera complications in that they expose homophobia and AIDS-phobia among the residents of Llanview and thus offer the characters —and the audience — an opportunity to address topics that daytime serials, along with the rest of US mass media, have generally preferred to ignore.

As recently as January of 1991, eighteen months before "The Accusation" (a name the producers gave to the gay plotline) appeared on OLTL, an article in *Soap Opera Weekly* explained "Why Daytime Isn't Gaytime," concluding that "homosexuals seem forever doomed to reside in the daytime's dark and lonely off-screen closet, deprived of light by narrow-mindedness and bigotry, kept there by ignorance and intolerance." The article may have been excessively pessimistic about the willingness of a soap's producers and network to introduce a gay character, but it was accurate on another score: the difficulty of having a regular character turn out gay. A writer for OLTL is quoted, "It's difficult to maintain a homosexual character as a hero over a period of time" — certainly true as long as such a character is not permitted to engage in numerous romantic couplings with other characters. As OLTL head writer Michael Malone explained at a University of Pennsylvania symposium in 1993, they decided to introduce a new character — Billy Douglas — to be the

continued on page 12

**"Let me tell you that you are the most courageous young person that I've ever seen. I know that I would never have the courage to play a homosexual teenager because I would be worried about what my friends and family would be thinking about me... I'm 17 and I can't really relate to Billy Douglas' position because I'm not gay and none of my friends are gay, but I'm sure it's present in our age group... I know a lot of people write to you and share some of their deepest secrets, but I can't do that because I don't even know you, though I wish I did... I know you live way up there in Delaware or New York and I live way down here in Florida, but I really wish I could get to know you and talk to you more. I guess I've taken up enough of your time, but just one more thing. I'm sure you have hundreds of friends up where you live, but if you ever need anybody to talk to, that doesn't really know you (I know this sounds funny, but hang in there!) but wishes he did, and is willing to lend an ear to a friend, give me a call any time (call collect)."**



# Wake Up and Smell the Lubricant

by Susie Day

I just found out that the APEX Sex Toy Company (a subsidiary of Dow Corning) gives stipends to promising lesbian writers. It's part of their corporate affirmative-action plan to take over the world. So I applied and they sent me these essay questions. Finally, after years of looking, I have "found" myself. I am going to be the greatest lesbian pornography writer who ever lived! Just look!

**Exercise 1.** *The first step in writing is to lose your inhibitions! Think of someone who is sexually uninhibited. Now, sit down and write for 20 minutes WITHOUT STOPPING about that person. Remember to write in a completely uncensored stream of consciousness. Don't be afraid to "go wild"!*

OK. Clock is ticking. Who do I know who's sexually uninhibited? Nobody. Doesn't matter. Keep writing. Just do it. Make something up. I'm not nervous. Keep writing. Breathe. Just breathe. GO!

Betty Lou lay on the divan. She was sprawled like a flattened toad on the highway, her hand resting greedily on her hot, pulsating you-know-what. — Keep writing — It was 2 o'clock on a July afternoon, and she had — uh, uh — no clothes on. Hot damn.

Betty Lou began to think of Bobby Jo. That feisty filly still brought up sexual connotations, even though the two had been going together for almost three weeks now. "Too bad Bobby Jo is not here," sighed Betty Lou. "I really feel hot and pulsating. I'd like to have uninhibited sex right now. I know — I'll call on Buford!"

So saying, she reached for Buford, her vibrator. Betty Lou only had two more payments to go, and Buford would be hers, all hers. It made her feel downright nonmonogamous! Hotcha! — Keep writing — So she plugged Buford in and flicked the little switch. "Whirrrrr," went Buford. Oh boy! Can't wait! — Keep writing — She then placed the funny-shaped plastic object into her hot, pulsating — uh, woo-woo, and and and

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. Betty Lou opened it grouchy. "Whaddaya want?" she sneered in her bathrobe. There stood two manly men from the Power and Light Company. "We have noticed that all the power lines in the area are hot and pulsating," they remarked manfully. "Have you been using any small appliances recently?"

"None of your fucking business —

Oh darn. Time's up. THE END

\* \* \*

**Exercise 2.** *Sex is all around us, EVEN in great literature! In fact, literature can be some of the headiest stuff there is. So, be a literary critic. Select your favorite story or poem and analyze it for its erotic content.*

Beauty is truth; truth, beauty. So what? For raw sexual imagery, nothing in Western Literature beats the classical poem "Little Miss Muffet."

The name "Muffet" itself, being of European descent, is an obvious euphemism for the word "muff," which the dictionary defines as: 1) (v) to bungle a performance; 2) (n) a cluster of feathers on the side of the face of some domestic owls, or 3) (n) a tubular hand covering deriving from the word "mit-ten" [cf. "Three Little Kittens"].

But this just shows how stupid the dictionary is. You would think that, after all these years, straight, white male lexicographers would attempt to keep up with the lesbian mind, at least as far as the word "muff" is concerned. I mean, whoever heard of "diving" into a cluster of facial feathers on some domestic owl? That's sick. To continue.

The author — who is either dead or too shy to collect royalties — seems to

make a naive, yet defiant plea for the legitimacy of autonomous childhood sexuality. The relentless dactylic meter:

*Little Miss Muffet, she sat on a tuffet/Eating her curds and whey...*

is evocative of a restive, protean passion; or possibly an eating disorder. Questions arise. Besides being some sort of sexual representation, what exactly is a tuffet? Did said tuffet need to be re-upholstered after a certain amount of Muffet action? In a contingent universe riddled with finitude and despair, can Miss Muffet truly be said to take responsibility for eating, or does she experience nausea? And what were underpants like in those days?

Alas, we may never know, for no sooner are the exposition and the rising action presented than the little poem reaches its searing "climax":

*Along came a spider and sat down beside her...*

Soon, too soon, we know the tragic consequences. The dark, hairy spider, symbolizing adult female genitalia (get it?), literally "frightens Miss Muffet away." This spider is a terrifyingly mature sexual presence, alerting the girl to the woman she is to become, to the demands of an oppressive patriarchal culture, and to the shockingly high cost of menstrual supplies.

However, since the poem first appeared circa 1697, one would have hoped that, nearly three hundred years later, Miss Muffet might have developed a more consciously empowering attitude toward sex, or might at least have undergone puberty, herself. But that's literature for you.

Think about it. If a large female crotch on eight legs crawled over and sat down beside you, you could at least go on with your life. But Miss Muffet, caught in the turgid web of meter and rhyme scheme; doomed for all eternity to repeat this puerile stimulus-response cycle, will literally have to "tuffet" out. She will never develop the self-esteem that would enable her either to bond with the "spider" or to go out and buy a can of Raid. Only a post-modern analysis can deconstruct the poem, and allow the hapless Miss to escape, but Western Culture is already crumbling, and I would rather read lesbian pornography anyhow.

\* \* \*

**Exercise 3.** *Now that you have worked through your inhibitions and sharpened your literary appreciation, it is time to write about what you know. Recreate a scene from your own life in which you had a meaningful encounter concerning sex. Try not to embellish. Just tell it "like it is."*

[Scene: My living room. My date and I have finished eating dinner and are sitting on the couch, awkwardly drinking tea from earthenware mugs. We both have short haircuts, wear overalls and flannel shirts. We resemble a feminist's conception of Mortimer Snerd, though we speak as college graduates.]

ME: [Staring off to the side; slackjawed, bored.] Duh...

HER: [Ardent and focused.] Darling, oh, darling [not my real name]. Those veggies and rice were wonderful. In fact, you're wonderful. You're so sexy. [Pause.]

ME: Thank you.

HER: I love how your little bowl haircut catches the light. I love your powerful woman energy.





Illustration: Jean Vallon

ME: Yeah, OK.  
 HER: Well, then [clearing her throat]. Do you want to go to bed with me?  
 ME: No. Be gone.  
 HER: But we've known each other for months; we have so much in common!  
 ME: It wouldn't work.  
 HER: But why?  
 ME: We're both 70's lesbians. There's no power imbalance here.  
 HER: But isn't that good?  
 ME: You can't have hot lezzie action without a power imbalance, and I want hot lezzie action. You see, I'm going to become the world's greatest lesbian pornographer. Grrrrrruff!  
 HER: You mean, write things like *The Wanderground*?  
 ME: Oh, honey, wake up and smell the lubricant. That was then; this is now! Now, there's got to be conflict — humiliation, politically correct inequality, stylized oppression! Not to mention many hot consumer accessories! I wanna write high-class stuff with a lot of wanking potential, but if all I know is Mary Daly and granola, nobody's gonna get off, see? I gotta live my art, do you understand? LIVE! ART! [Pause.] You wouldn't want to put this hood on, would you?  
 HER: EEEWWWWW. Can't we just talk? Really share? That's one of the best ways to achieve intimacy, you know.  
 ME: Feh! Pitooley! I spit on your intimacy! [Snapping my fingers, I get an idea.] I know! We'll have an erotic adventure! [Taking out notebook and pencil, I begin pacing, making notes.] I'll call it: "She Schtupps to Conquer!" If you want to be close to me, baby, you have to be anonymous. Now put on the hood. [Still on the couch, she does. We will remain in separate areas, not touching.]  
 ME: We'll meet in a bar —  
 HER: I don't drink.  
 ME: A rough, working class bar on the "wrong" side of town.  
 HER: It's dark in here.  
 ME: Dark but steamy. We won't know each other, of course, but just as I'm sitting down on a barstool, you spill your beer in my lap. That makes me mad. Damn mad. "You'll have to be taught a LESSON," I say. So I ease my 40-dollar 501's down over my hips — the spikes of my 25-dollar leather bracelets gleaming in the strobelight — grab you by the hair, and ram your face into my hot, wet pussy —  
 HER: You brought your cat?  
 ME: SHUT UP, BITCH... into my hot, wet treasure box — uh, hope chest... Anyhow, I force you to lick — no, suck — all the wetness, until you are thoroughly drunk on my vital woman's juices, trickling down my thighs, covering your hair with female ejaculate.  
 HER: And me with a new perm.  
 ME: Right. So that makes you mad, see? Damn mad. I love anger. So you put on your Texas Ranger outfit, hog-tie me, and drag me into the restroom, while everybody grunts and cheers.

continued on page 31

## Home Health Aides

**Build a rewarding career right in your own neighborhood!**

The Visiting Nurse Association of Boston, New England's leader in home health care, is looking for Home Health Aides to visit patient homes in your neighborhood. Immediate opportunities are available for **CERTIFIED HOME HEALTH AIDES** and **PAID TRAINING IS AVAILABLE FOR NURSING STUDENTS AND QUALIFIED CANDIDATES.**

- Health Insurance
- Paid Training
- Flexible Schedules
- Shift Differentials
- Paid Time Off
- Cash Bonus
- And More!

For immediate consideration, please contact the Human Resources Department at (617) 457-7844 or visit our office at 75 Arlington Street, Boston to complete an application Monday- Friday between 8:00am and 4:00pm. An EOE.

Visiting Nurse Association of Boston

## Affordable Health Care For Our Community

Fenway Community Health Center is greater Boston's only health center serving the needs of the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities.

### The Care You Need.

We offer:

Primary Health Care  
 Gynecological Care  
 Mental Health Counseling  
 Walk-in Drug Treatment  
 Anonymous HIV Testing  
 Acupuncture and Massage  
 Chiropractic Care

Smoking Cessation Programs  
 Alternative Insemination  
 Sexually-Transmitted Disease (STD) Clinic  
 Mondays, 4:30 - 6:30 pm  
 No appointment necessary

**(617) 267-0900**



Community Health Center  
**FENWAY**

7 Haviland Street, Boston, MA 02115

Most major commercial health insurance accepted. Wheelchair accessible.  
 Low-cost validated parking available under the building.



**CELEBRATING OUR 20<sup>TH</sup> YEAR WITH PRIDE!**

.....

MONDAY-FRIDAY: 10am-8pm  
 SATURDAY: 10am-6pm SUNDAY: 12 noon-6pm  
 .....

186 Hampshire St., Inman Sq., Cambridge, MA 02139  
 (617) 876-5310

Full Mail Order Services Available

**New Words**  
 A Women's Bookstore



# Disarming Hostile Majorities: A Queer Reading of Lani Guinier on Voting Rights

by Binny Miller

Beginning in 1977, when Anita Bryant and her Religious Right associates won their referendum to overturn a gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida, our rights as gays and lesbians have been subjected to a majority, winner-take-all process. Today, as we confront a series of hostile referenda in cities, towns and states, rethinking the process of our political empowerment within a majority democracy becomes an urgent task. The work of Lani Guinier provides a window onto such rethinking.

Guinier emerged as a public figure with her nomination by President Clinton to serve as the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. Her nomination brought her work on voting rights under the scrutiny of the mainstream media, whose framing of the issues was directed by rightwing analysts like Clint Bolick. Accusations against Guinier for being "race-obsessed," having "anti-democratic leanings" and labels such as "quota queen" shaped the debate that led Clinton to withdraw her nomination. Clinton's retreat from Guinier and from ending the ban on gays in the military is viewed by conservatives as part of the same issue: drawing the boundary on who is an outsider. Thus, Irving Kristol links Guinier's criticism of majority rule with the gay movement, calling "...the radical gay-rights movement [and] the voting-rights arguments of Lani Guinier" "currents... far out of the mainstream."

## The Impact of Voting Rights

In questioning the established wisdom in voting rights, Guinier looks beyond formal rights to the question of how minorities can achieve true citizenship in the face of hostile majorities. Guinier uses the cultural example of a prom at Brother Rice, a Catholic boys' high school in Chicago, to demonstrate how majority rule ignores the interests of minority voters. At Brother Rice, white students vastly outnumbered Black students and in the vote on the music for the prom, the white students' choice of music always prevailed over the Black students' choices. Guinier's point is that while the

Black students had a vote—and thus formal inclusion—they were excluded from determining the outcome. She argues that fairness in the voting process must guarantee that minorities can affect the outcomes. Guinier's goal is to design democratic voting procedures that force majorities to recognize and integrate minorities on the terms set by the minority. In this case, it was not until the Black students instituted a separate prom that their choices were honored.

Although the Voting Rights Act protects only voters who are members of racial or language minority groups, not others who have been oppressed in the political process, Guinier's ideas nonetheless speak volumes about political empowerment for all voters. Her vision grew out of the Black civil rights movement and her writings address the Black community's quest for political power, but her solutions apply to a broad range of voters who define themselves as a community and vote cohesively. Guinier's arguments do not create legal rights and remedies for lesbian and gay voters, but rather suggest a future direction for how we think about political power.

## Queer Routes to Political Power: Insider vs Grassroots Politics

Lesbian and gay political activity runs the gamut from insiders who practice sophisticated party politics to direct action groups doing grassroots organizing. Each of these involves different choices about the nature of political power and the direction of our movement.

Guinier recognizes the need for minorities to get

their feet in the door, but argues that "insiders" must be authentic representatives in order for minorities to achieve real political power and that insider politics cannot dominate the agenda at the expense of forming grassroots coalitions among progressive groups. These lessons are critically important at a time in our movement when we are struggling with questions about the path to increased political decision-making for the lesbian and gay community.

## Creating a Political Presence

In assessing the question of political power, Guinier traces the evolution of voting rights from "first generation" issues of access to the ballot box that predominated through the '60s, to the current "second generation" focus on electing minority candidates to office, to the more radical "third generation" agenda of making legislative bodies more responsive to a diverse range of views. In the more than 25 years since the Voting Rights Act was passed, traditional civil rights advocates have adopted the shorthand method of counting the number of minority elected officials to measure political power. In their view, as long as the numbers are roughly proportional to the voting strength of the minority voters in a particular jurisdiction (meaning the percentage of minorities in the voting age population), equality has been achieved. While this proportionality yardstick looks beyond the conservative mantra of "equal opportunity," it considers only how electoral power is gained, not the impact of our political presence on legislative and other outcomes.

continued on page 14

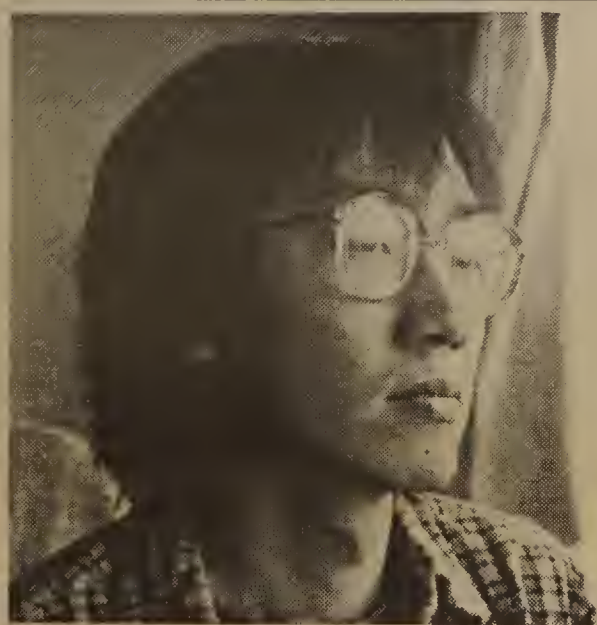




# Siong Huat Chua 1954-1994

I met S.H. when I first became involved with GLAD in 1982, and we became friends during our years together on the GLAD board. Like all of the board in those early days, he put in hundreds of hours of work to help build the organization - he did everything from stuffing envelopes to organizing the very first forum on sexual orientation and immigration. S.H. served on the GLAD board until he became ill in 1989, and during that time he was truly the conscience of the board. Whenever the board was faced with "controversial" matter, whenever it appeared that the dangers of taking on an issue might be greater than the dangers of letting it go, S.H. was our moral compass. He constantly reminded us that we are all outlaws, and though some in our community may be less popular than others, they are no less a part of our community. S.H. refused to let our community be divided into the often tempting categories of "bad gays" and "good gays". He lived his convictions, and I like to think that in some way they live on in those of us who knew and loved him. I owe him a lot-I miss him.

Jan Platner



A generous friend, an inspiring activist, a wonderful storyteller and writer, and an entertaining if somewhat reluctant gossip. S.H. I regret his leaving us so soon.

Sharon Lim-Hing

## Excerpt from Celebrian '89 Speech by Siong Huat Chua

"... Nowadays it is fashionable to say that the gay and lesbian community is a diverse community. We are made of people of different ages and different ethnicities and different physical abilities and so on. But underneath this talk of diversity it is obvious there remains the assumption of who the real gay man or the real lesbian is. Look at what we call gay culture, the newspapers, books, poetry, the ads, videos - it is still quite clear who gay culture is being created for and by. Gay culture portrays the lives, the ideas, the aspirations of gay and lesbian people who are for the most part white and urban and middle-class. They are the consumers and the producers. They are the mainstream, they are at the center. That is why the rest of us are called minorities-the major characters are white, if you happen not to be white you are just a bit player. How many of us because we consume this gay culture have accepted this as the way things should be. But not tonight honey. AMALGM is putting an end to that. We are challenging the myth of mainstream and periphery tonight. Tonight Asian gay men and lesbians are at the center. Our ideas, our creativities are at the center. Tonight we are not peripheral or marginal, we are important. We take center stage tonight. We will see a new gay culture created tonight ..."

## Excerpts from S.H.'s Obituary

Siong Huat Chua, gay activist, writer, and computer analyst, died on August 15th at age 39 after a courageous five year struggle with AIDS. Siong Huat (S.H.) was born and raised in Malacca, Malaysia. He came to the United States in 1974 to study at M.I.T.

Siong Huat was a pivotal activist in the gay and lesbian and Asian communities. He was a founding member of BAGMAL, Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians, which later became AMALGM (Alliance of Massachusetts Asian Lesbians and Gay Men) - the first gay Asian organization in North America.

His history of activism in the gay community dates to the late 1970's. He was a member of the Editorial Collective of Fag Rag and a long-time contributor to Gay Community News, and did volunteer work at Glad Day Bookstore for many years. He played a key role for many years on board of directors of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders and was instrumental in organizing the G.L.A.D. forums on immigration and law. He also donated time and computer expertise at Glad Day Bookstore for many years.

Siong Huat edited the AMALGM newsletter and conducted a series of interviews exploring different aspects of Asian gay experience in the United States. He appeared in the documentary "Fighting Chance" by Richard Fung, a video dealing with AIDS and the gay Asian community. At the time of his death he was working on a series of autobiographical short stories. He was an organizer of the 1992 OutWrite conference-a lesbian gay literary conference, but also found time to give a prize-winning performance as Peking Opera star "Jaded Pearl" in a drag contest.

Siong Huat was diagnosed with AIDS in March of 1989. Despite his deteriorating health, he continued to give generously to the gay community and his many close friends. He will be remembered for his great mah jong parties, wicked wit and warm heart. He is survived by his lover of twelve years, Victor Bloise, his supportive and loving family in Malaysia, and his many devoted friends. He was surrounded by friends and family at the time of his death.

"... some memories are so far away in time it can feel like they belong to someone else, as if they wound up in my brain by accident, some giant postal slip-up. I am thinking back to the day I met Siong Huat, the man I call my best friend, trying to remember who we both were then ... I was sitting in the FagRag office, the big room behind the GCN offices on Bromfield Street. Glad Day Books was on the other side of the staircase. This was a few years before all the offices were blown up and we moved to separate quarters. In the FagRag office we were having our monthly "poetry slam"-sorting through the hundred or so poems we received every month to find the two or three we liked enough to print. We were desperate to find ways to get through the poems faster-we had just made a rule that automatically disqualified all poems that compared cock-sucking to eating ice-cream cones. This cut our work down by about twenty-five percent. At the same time a twenty-four year old Chinese man was climbing the Bromfield Street stairs to the bookstore, the end of months of deliberation, finding the address, locating the street, circling towards the door, the end of years of silence and pain. He started talking to Jearld, the owner, who became one of his good friends over the years. Jearld picked up on his leftist views and brought him over to meet the FagRag crew. Siong Huat sat down at the table, got to work with us, and immediately became a FagRag editor, as if he had been working with us for years. This is how I met my friend..."

Mark Matthiessen, nee Maya Silverthorne

## excerpt from Exiles in Struggle Giggles, by Charley Shively

ear rings  
sparkle in  
opposites  
going away  
so many border  
sewn equations  
unknown science  
pocket filter  
mother who  
serves cold  
weather warm  
hands skin  
child absorbs  
refugee lost  
all searching  
for continual  
harbor haven  
airport lovers never  
leave a trace  
fathers family  
name rural foundry  
smoke dancing  
in opera flames  
plumb flower fairy

"... One night I was surprised by a phone call from Siong Huat. He had heard that I had worked as a photographer once, and he wanted me to accompany him to help "cover a story" for GCN - the finals of the Mr. New England contest being held at the No Name in Providence. We drove down to Providence with his friends Phil and John and found the little bar. The contest got underway and I started snapping photos. I can't remember all the phases of this contest - tuxedos became bikinis and the crowd went wild as the boys strutted down the runway, flexed their oiled muscles and struck their poses. S.H. was scribbling down the bios of the contestants and I knelt by the runway trying to get dramatic, low angle shots that would give a towering feeling to all the bodybuilders - who seemed to be - now that I think of it - all rather short. Finally they awarded the title to the winner. I remember S.H. being indignant because his favorite, a curly-haired bank teller by day, was only a runner up. After the coronation ceremony, we squeezed our way backstage to interview the contestants. S.H. questioned them with his ridiculous seriousness, spending extra time flirting with his special favorite. When it was all over we rode triumphantly back to Boston, S.H. spinning out a hilarious analysis and composing his story in the back of the car as we rocketed up 95 North. That was the first of many adventures with S.H. Images of his smiling face crowd my mind - dancing at the Limelight, apple-picking, belting Dionne Warwick songs into the karaoke box, wading in the pool of a waterfall, clattering mah jong tiles around on the green table, eating dim sum and gossiping, watching Hong Kong action movies, and smiling mischievously at me while he did Tai Chi in his pajamas on my family's porch in Vermont. But when S.H. died in August, I found myself remembering this funny trip to the No Name again, and how he had gone to this obscure little event and then written about it as if he were covering the biggest story in the world. It seems to capture an angle of his personality that enchanted me. He was so fascinated by people and their lives, so delighted by the world and open to its tiny wonders that he was able to turn the most mundane excursion into a wonderful adventure ..."

Isabel Eccles



Soaps continued from page 7

centerpiece of "The Accusation" because they didn't want to have a regular long-term teenage character turn out to be gay.

The plotline featuring Billy Douglas was the dominant thread of *OLTL* from July through early September 1992, after which Billy appeared less frequently until he left Llanview for Yale the following Spring. Billy Douglas was played by a young actor named Ryan Phillippe, in his first professional role, and he found himself at the center of a great deal of media and audience attention. He received an unusually large amount of mail even for a good-looking young soap opera actor. Even more unusual was the fact that so many of the letters he received during the months that he appeared on *OLTL* came from young men, most of whom identified themselves as gay; in an interview in *Au Courant*, Phillippe reported getting two thousand letters, adding that "a good 45 percent... [were] from homosexual teenagers."

For many of the young gay men—and several of the older men—a gay movement appears unknown, or perhaps irrelevant or unreachable—the fear of exposure is so great. In 1992, 23 years after Stonewall, a straight actor playing a gay teenager on TV seems their best hope for support, advice and sometimes even friendship. For many, he is also their first confidante for stories of isolation and terror.

As one adult wrote:

Dear Ryan:

Your performance has been 'right on.' I am a happily married, successful father of two teenagers (one, your age, equally good looking as you). I am fifty-five years old, and have kept my sexual preference (gay) a secret, except for a few very close friends, all my life. I have stepped on land mines through high school, college, the army, for two years as a bank official, anti-poverty worker, and college professor. Have I been successful? Yes. Has my life been a torture chamber of lies and deceit? Yes... Ryan, your performance as Billy makes me so proud. I cry every time you face a new crisis, but the tears are cathartic. I know it must seem impossible to you that a youngster such as yourself can do so much to help a 55-year old, but you have made me proud of who I am, for the first time in my life.

You see, I lived the character you are playing, and still live it, although in the 'closet'. I've never been a victim of homophobia, because no one knows I'm a life-long, born-that-way homosexual, comfortable with who I am, but not comfortable with living as a gay person. Still your character has created an empathy in me, because I can relate so well to your character.

You are doing a service to millions of people, whether you know it or not, just by bringing the subject to a mass audience. Keep up the good work.

Sorry, I can't sign this letter.

#### In Training To Be Gay

When Ryan Phillippe was offered the role of Billy Douglas, the 17 year-old actor was just graduating from New Castle (Delaware) Baptist high school and it was his first professional acting role. As he told *Entertainment Weekly* in 1992, "The most dramatic scene I did before this was a Nintendo commercial." Despite his qualms about the nature of the role he was to play, the young actor approached the part and the unexpected visibility it brought with remarkable maturity. In the initial flurry of press attention, Phillippe was, as he later acknowledged in *Au Courant*, somewhat too eager to establish that he himself is heterosexual.

"I did want people to know that I was straight. It was an immature act, but what more can you expect from a 17-year-old who has not really been out in the world a whole lot? But then I got to the

point soon after that, where I thought, 'You know, that's really not the issue'... My sexual orientation is not necessarily all that important. And if I'm not asked, I won't say, 'Hey, you have to print that I'm straight.' But if it comes out, there shouldn't be any reason why I should hide it and there shouldn't be any reason why a homosexual person should hide it."

The producers helped Phillippe and other cast members prepare by having them meet with Richard Isay, a gay psychiatrist who works with gay teens, and he was also given books such as Aaron Fricke's *Reflections of a Rock Lobster: A Story of Growing Up Gay* (1981). But his real education began when the letters started pouring in.

"The most research for me probably came from my fan mail, because a good 45 percent was from homosexual teenagers. Siblings of these teenagers or these teenagers themselves would write into me, and it was incredibly touching. I'd get some letters with kids telling me, literally, that they were going to commit suicide if they didn't get the right answers by the end of the summer, and did I have any help? They were wrestling with the decision on whether to come out or not and if it's wrong; that's where most of my research came from."

Answering many of these letters was a more demanding and sensitive task for Phillippe than it typically is for soap opera actors. Letters from gay teenagers — and some quite a bit older — required more than the usual signed photograph.

"I had to be very tactful. I couldn't write anything that would sway a kid either way, because of course that's not my place. But I wrote back, and I would send some hotline numbers. And I took one of the letters in particular that really was disturbing in terms of suicidal tendencies to a psychiatrist for the show, and he kind of wrote a form letter for me to send which helped a lot."

#### Gay Relationships: Not Allowed

Somewhat surprisingly, there were literally no negative or hostile letters received by Phillippe or the show's producers in response to the gay teenager or the other elements of the plotline focussing on homophobia and AIDS-phobia. It was only later, in December of 1992, when Billy Douglas, who was by then playing a much smaller role on *OLTL*, met and began a friendship with another gay youth, that the program began to receive negative letters. The relationship between Billy and his friend was not allowed to develop before Billy "left for Yale," and thus viewers — and the producers — were spared the question of whether soap opera's first gay teenagers would be allowed to kiss.

#### Women and Family Troubles

While the letters from young gay men were often the most personal, some from young women described their reactions to the struggles of gay family members. One Milwaukee 18-year old wrote, "I guess I'm interested in this story because my brother is gay. He just told our family about a year ago and I can honestly say it's been the hardest year of my life." A fifteen year old girl from New Jersey wrote that "this storyline has held some special meaning for me. It's helped me sort out some of my feelings about homosexuality. You see, my mother 'came out of the closet' 4 years ago, and while I willingly accepted the fact that she was a lesbian, I never quite understood it." Interestingly, this teenager recounts that she is "very active with gay and lesbian organizations," has written, marched, "spoken on panels about being a child of a lesbian," and joined in creating a "group for teens of gay and lesbian families," and yet she also writes that "I haven't confided in any of my friends that my mother is gay." A college junior from Memphis wrote about her parents' divorce, when her mother "told me that my father was a homosexual," and her eventual decision to live with her father:

When your character, Billy Douglas, stood up and told his family and friends that he was gay, my heart leapt out for his bravery and I lost touch of reality, wanting to hug him for being who he was and no longer pretending. It was the same feeling I got when my dad told me he was living with someone, and that someone was a man.

The relatively few letters from older women included some standard fan letters (one enthusiastic California fan predicted that Phillippe would become "the Cary Grant of the 90s — the ultimate figure of grace and style") as well as several from writers who had a more personal response. One woman identified herself as a 39 year old lesbian and told how she tried to use the *OLTL* plotline to tell her father about the "sad hatred of prejudice and bigotry." His response was to exclaim, "Don't tell me they still have that faggot storyline going," and walked away."



#### Ryan: You're The First To Know

Many of the letters from gay male viewers included emotional accounts of their own experiences. The younger (and even some of the older) gay correspondents wrote that they had never told anyone that they are gay:

It's like everything you say on the show is related to what I was feeling this past year! The only difference between your character Billy and myself is that I haven't told anyone that I am gay. I think like maybe I should wait awhile because my friends would not be cool about it at all. When I go to college this fall, maybe I'll join the Gay Students Group but I have to be careful that my friends don't find out!... Ryan, you are the only person who knows I'm gay. This letter was difficult to write and I hope I did the right thing by sharing my secret with you.

Or:

I know that you probably get sick and tired of this, but I think that I may be bisexual... I don't have any close friends, you're the first person I've ever talked to this way. I'm scared. I'm 16 and I feel all alone. Can you help me? Maybe you could come to Nebraska for a week sometime so that I'd have someone to talk to. I could show you around here (maybe some farms and surrounding cities)... I can't wait for your help when you write back. Thank you for listening to me. I already feel as if you're a real good friend. I have opened up like never before. I trust you with my secret.

Gay teens were writing out of a frightening despair. One Kentucky 16-year old wrote on First Baptist Church stationery:

Ryan, what I'm about to tell you is something very hard for me to tell anybody. Ryan, I'm gay



*BUT I don't want to be. Ryan, the only person in this world I can relate to is your character Billy Douglas. Ryan, I'm so scared. I don't know what to do and I'm afraid of what I might do. You, God and I are the only ones that know! Ryan, PLEASE help! I need someone to talk to... You are the only one that I am telling. I need to talk to someone one-on-one, or (I hate to say it) but I'm afraid that I may come to the point where I may (I hope not!) but, I may kill myself... Please call me soon (please very soon).*

And some of the stories they told confirm that feelings such as these can not be dismissed as adolescent self-dramatization:

*I'm almost 17. I've got a girlfriend but, I've been hiding my true feelings, especially since what happened last March. Last August I met a new friend at school. His name was Derek. By Thanksgiving,*

*then insulted when told that their friend is "not attracted" to them. Eventually, as Billy encounters hostility from others in the community, Joey comes around and supports his friend. There seem to be many Joeys among the viewers of OLTL.*

*I'm attached to this storyline because a friend of mine came to me with his secret of homosexuality a few months ago. Like Billy, his parents would probably freak and do God knows what. However, also like Billy's friend Joey, for whom I see myself as, I was very uncomfortable. It is upsetting for me to see what Billy feels and experiences and then relate it to my friend.*

Some of the Joey Buchanans didn't come around as quickly as the fictional version:

*I am a little confused as how to begin this letter since I have never written to a soap before or a*

*was a Representative in the state House of Representatives, and any flaw in his family life could hurt his chance for re-election... On June 6, two weeks after Billy told me he was gay, he was acting real strange. He was crying and he asked me to hold on to his class ring. He told me he was alright though. I know that I should not have believed him, but I did. We were graduating from high school that evening. He told me he would see me that night around seven. At eight o'clock right before graduation started I left because Billy was not there and I knew something was wrong. When I got to Billy's house, I knew what was wrong. There were police cars everywhere in Billy's yard. His mother told me — Billy was dead. He killed himself with his father's gun. I never had a chance to tell him that it didn't matter if he was gay. he was still my best friend and I loved him. That is something I can never change... He was my best friend for eleven years. I miss him. You could not*



*we had become really good friends. He told me he was gay. I was afraid to tell him how I felt, at first. Before Christmas I told him. For the next couple of months, we talked about the difficulty of living gay in a straight world. Then one day, he said he was going to tell his father and mother that he was gay. I told him to do whatever he wanted, but he'd better not mention my name or I'd never speak to him again. He told his father he was gay. His father beat the shit out of him. Then Derek took his father's gun, drove out to the country and killed himself. I miss him so much.*

Those older recalled experiences similar to those Billy Douglas was encountering, and some were inspired by Billy's courage:

*You and Billy have been an inspiration to me this summer. I am 28, gay, and still in a painful closet, but I want to get out of it. I am tired of hiding. I have thought about coming out for a while now, but Billy's story has hastened my desire.*

#### Identifying With Billy's Friend

Some of the most interesting letters came from young men who identified as straight (though, in some cases, it was hard not to wonder whether the writers might not yet come out.). A large proportion of these writers seemed especially moved by the relationship between Billy Douglas and his best friend, Joey Buchanan. On the program Billy first tells his close female friend, Alana, that he is gay, and she is consistently supportive. But when he later tells his "best friend" Joey the response is less heartening. Joey has a hard time accepting the news and dealing with his friend's sexuality. To the credit of the writers, they completely avoided the tired sitcom cliché in which a character comes out as gay to a straight friend who is immediately worried that the gay character will "come on" to them, and is

*soap actor for that matter... I am 22 years of age... I have to admit something to you, one of the reasons why your character struck a chord in me was because the events going on in the show happened quite similarly to me. I had a good friend who confided in me that he was gay. I, like Joey, did not take it very well. I was 17 at the time and anyone who even talked, walked or acted gay was instantly an outcast... Unfortunately, it took an accident that almost cost him his life that made me see more clearly. One night, after a school dance, he was being picked on and he was beat up in the parking lot. Next day FAGGOT was painted all over his locker and I think that pushed him over the edge. A few days later he didn't come to school, we all thought he was hiding at home ashamed of himself but the reality was that he had tried to commit suicide. He, fortunately did not die, but he did transfer to another school. I cried for I really never got a chance to say how sorry I was... Now, you're probably asking yourself what does this guy want? Actually a response of some kind or other just so I know someone received it. Hell we may even become pen pals.*

And some of the Billy Douglasses were not as lucky:

*My best friend, whose name ironically was also Billy, told me in May that he was gay. I got pretty upset with him. After all of these years of being friends, why was he just now telling me? I never suspected it and when he told me, it caught me off guard. I said some things that I probably should not have, well I know I should not have said them, Billy was telling me his deepest secret, and all I could do was act like a jerk. Billy tried to tell his parents, but they are super conservative. Both of our families live in the X Country Club, which is filled with conservative families... Billy's father*

*tell that Billy was gay just by looking at him. He was never a sissy. He played football and baseball, and he was great with kids. I hope your role in OLTL makes a difference in people like Billy's life.*

Some writers were older Joey Buchanans:

*This is the first letter I have ever written to an actor but after watching your character these past few weeks I felt I had to. I am a farmer here in Illinois and watched One Life to Live occasionally. I happened to catch the show in which your character told Joey he was gay. Since that day I have been taping your show... Please let me explain why I am so interested in your character. Shortly after I graduated from High School a friend of mine from church, who was a couple years younger than myself, told me he was gay. I am sorry to say that I did not handle it very well and I lost a good friend because of it. Watching your character has helped me to understand what he was going through back then.*

And some, still struggling with the hostility of family members towards their gay children and siblings, found the OLTL plotline a help in dealing with an issue too many families prefer to repress:

*... it was almost ten years ago that my older brother revealed to the family that he in fact was gay. From that day forward the entire family was ripped apart. There was separation, isolation and plenty of anger... My father watches OLTL, but it's hard for him to watch your storyline. We encourage him to, especially me because I want him to know what it was like for his young son and what it is like now. Your storyline is far from being a solution to the rift in my family but in so many ways it provides us all with a start.*

*continued next page*



### Moving Past The Confines of Fan-Letters

How to think about, understand the nature of the relationships these writers feel that they have with Ryan Phillippe, an actor they have seen in a single role and, possibly, in TV and magazine interviews; or is it with Billy Douglas, the troubled but courageous gay teenager, who reminds them of themselves or of a friend or relative?

Certainly, some of the writers seem to confuse the fictional character with the actor, addressing letters to Billy or, even while writing to Ryan, seeming to treat Billy and his family as real people:

*Like you, I am also having the difficult time in dealing with the fact that I'm gay. My parents are not as (freaked out) as your parents are — but they're not far from it... Sometimes I wish that we could have been friends... I feel like things will never work out. I truly hate being gay. I would rather be dead than disappoint my parents, friends, by them finding out that I'm gay. All this hiding is very tiring. Take care. [signed] Confused*

Many of the letters from young men, mostly gay-identified but some who identify as straight, are reaching out for some form of relationship beyond the one-way channels of TV-viewing and letter writing:

*Many people, like me, are still afraid to come out... I myself am a gay teen who had no one to talk to and thought about suicide constantly... All I ask is that maybe we could be friends. (18 year old)*

Or:

*I'm 19 years old and I live in XX, Colorado, and I'm gay. This is the first time I have ever told someone that.... Some of my closest friends say prejudiced things about gays and it hurts me very deeply because I am pretty sure they would have nothing to do with me if they knew about me. I hope that you aren't like that in real life; I'm pretty sure that you aren't but one never really knows... If it's alright with you maybe we could write each other every so often? I would really like that!!*

Even some of the adult male writers gave clear evidence of wanting to move past the confines of fan-letter writing and signed photographs:

*Times have changed a great deal since I was a young man of your age. I wasn't 'found out' till my freshman year in college. My parents and I didn't have any conflict or even discussion. When I was asked to leave the seminary, they sent me to a psychiatrist who confirmed that I had latent homosexual tendencies... Know this. You would be welcome here — no commitments, sexual or otherwise, if in your real life situation you needed a home. One rule — no drugs.*

These writers, both isolated and fearful, or haunted by memories, direct their confessions, their overtures and their pleas for help to a young, straight soap star playing a troubled gay youth. Apparently it is the case that in the 1990s many teenagers and even adults are confronting—in almost total isolation—the choice between the stifling agony of the closet and the possibility, even certainty, of familial and societal rejection. They do not feel connected to any gay/lesbian communities. Nor do they feel able to establish relationships with anyone who can support them. Thus an inexperienced but sincere young heterosexual actor can find himself playing not only role model but also confessor and phantom friend to people in great pain and need.

**Larry Gross teaches at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. A version of this article was presented at the panel session, "Coming Out in Popular Media," Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Studies and Popular Interest Culture Groups, in Sydney, Australia in July 1994. I'd like to acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of Ryan Phillippe and his family, of Michael Malone, head writer (and now producer) of *OLTL*, and my colleague Joan DeJean, who had better write the full story of *OLTL*.**

---

Guinier continued from page 10

Guinier rejects the notion that the Voting Rights Act is merely a numbers game, and instead envisions a transformative third-generation politics in which real political power lies in governing, not just in votes cast at the ballot box.

The story of lesbian and gay electoral politics does not parallel in every respect the story of Black political participation that Guinier tells. Lesbian and gay voters were not formally barred from voting as were Black voters through such devices as the white primary or literacy tests. Although the number of lesbian and gay elected officials has increased dramatically in the past decade, second-generation remedies have less allure for us than for the Black community. Our numbers are not large enough or sufficiently geographically concentrated that the use of single-member districts could dramatically increase our numbers of elected officeholders, as this remedy did in the '70s and '80s for Black voters and elected officials.

### Authentic Representation

The closest parallels lie in Guinier's third-generation ideas about authentic representatives and governance. She argues that it is not enough for minorities to

have a seat at the table, but that those seated at the table must be the authentic representatives of their community and must participate equally in governance. An authentic representative is chosen by the community that she represents and is accountable to that community. For authentic representatives to have a voice in government, the rules that apply to the deliberations of the governing body must be fair and give every representative a real chance to affect the outcome of deliberations.

Guinier's concept of an authentic representative was mischaracterized by the media as racially divisive. For Guinier, an authentic representative must have the support of her community and be able to take up and understand the issues important to that community. The representative need not necessarily share the same race or sexual orientation as her supporters. Thus, a white candidate with ideological views similar to his Black constituents could fairly represent those constituents, as could a Black candidate who shares similar views with white constituents.

For our community, there are a number of unanswered questions about the nature of authentic representation. Can our straight allies speak to gay issues as effectively and with as much conviction as gay and lesbian officeholders? For some, like conservative gay author Bruce Bawer (*A Place at the Table*), the identity of being gay is not a political identity, and there is no such thing as gay and lesbian politics. Bawer argues that gays should downplay our differences with straights in return for a "place at the big table with the rest of the family." The notion of an authentic representative finds no room in this view.

Even for those who reject this assimilationist view the concept of authenticity is complicated. An example is provided by the Boston city council election in 1992, in which a gay white Republican opposed a straight Black progressive Democrat in the race and class diverse South End. The straight candidate had a strong record on gay/lesbian rights. Many lesbian and gay progressives rejected the easy label that the Republican candidate was "one of our own" and doubted that he could represent the diversity in the South End.

To say that lesbian and gay voters should only support lesbian or gay candidates ignores the fact that lesbian and gay voters cross racial lines and that our community, like most communities, is embattled over the meaning of race. Many of us also hold a bundle of other identities — gender, race, party affiliation, and the like. Would — or should — a lesbian of color vote for a white gay male candidate over a progressive female candidate who shares her racial identity? While sexual orientation is a defining characteristic, it is not the only one.

The verdict is out on whether lesbians and gays bloc vote, that is, tend to vote as a group. While most American voters vote along racial lines, lesbian and gay political clout is new enough that "queer bloc voting" is only beginning to be documented. Seventy percent of lesbian and gay voters voted for Clinton, surpassed only by the support he received from Black and Jewish voters. While San Francisco gay politicians talk about delivering the gay vote, in the recent Los Angeles mayoral election more than one-quarter of the gay electorate was estimated to vote for the conservative Republican victor, Richard Riordan, rather than his opponent who was supported by the gay leadership.

Whatever the definition of an authentic representative, Guinier reminds us that electing a representative is only the first step. Real political power lies in governance. Although the particulars of Guinier's proposals (such as minority vetoes, supermajority voting and rotation in office) for increasing the influence of minority representatives on governing bodies are technical and intricate, the key is that Guinier asks us to reconceptualize power and representation.

The lesson for lesbian and gay politics is that we can have access to power but we will not have real political power until our voices are heard. And this means more than putting more candidates in political office or having access to the White House. Although lesbian and gay candidates have become increasingly visible, by some counts numbering about 200 officeholders, political empowerment does not necessarily follow. As the gays in the military issue demonstrates, it is simply not enough to be a friend of Bill's.

### Cross-Cultural Coalitions

Guinier's proposed remedies also speak to the question of political power for lesbians and gays by reflecting her insight that real change only occurs at the grassroots when groups that are outside the mainstream form coalitions with other progressive groups. Her proposed remedies create structural support for cross-cultural coalitions, especially for local elections. These coalitions matter both in terms of election outcomes, and in terms of what we can learn from each other in the process of forming these coalitions.

Guinier tackles head-on the old-style single-member district remedies, arguing that they have not lived up to the promise of the Civil Rights Movement. In a pure at-large system, coalition voters would have to comprise more than 50 percent of the voters to prevail in a head-to-head contest. Minority voters are typically shut out of the political process in such a system because they are nearly always outvoted by the majority.

While single-member district remedies lessen the impact of at-large elections by carving out districts with high concentrations of minority voters, these remedies are geographically based and exclude minorities who live outside of the boundaries of the district. Moreover, district voters have little incentive to organize with voters who live outside of the district.

In contrast, her proposals for modified at-large remedies such as cumulative and limited voting in effect allow people to "district themselves" into different



communities of interest. In cumulative voting, each voter is given as many votes as there are candidates and can then distribute those votes among one or more candidates. In this way, minority voters can concentrate all of their votes behind a single candidate and gain some measure of political power. In limited voting, each voter gets fewer votes than there are positions to fill, which prevents the majority from controlling the outcome of the election for every seat.

While these remedies were played in the press as racist and divisive, they are in fact race-neutral and could be utilized by diverse groups of like-minded voters. Her solutions would allow gay and lesbian voters to link our votes with other minority or previously excluded constituencies — such as communities of color, women, and labor — throughout the city or county. Where these coalitions are large enough, lesbian and gay interests can prevail in the election of candidates or the outcome of referenda.

Only when gays and lesbians recognize our connections with other progressive movements will we achieve real political power. Our numbers are simply too small to control the outcome of most elections or legislative deliberations without establishing these kinds of coalitions. The lesbian and gay vote in the 1992 elections has been estimated as approximately 3 per cent of the total votes cast. Even in cities such as New York and Los Angeles, the estimated lesbian and gay vote constituted less than 10 percent of the turnout in recent mayoral elections. Although exit polls undercount lesbian and gay voters, even more realistic estimates of our voting strength leave us in the minority.

It is here that Guinier's story about the Chicago prom may have a larger message. Like the students at the Chicago high school, lesbian and gay students in Los Angeles organized a separate prom. These proms had the real advantage of allowing their participants to feel like they belonged without the kind of self-consciousness that they experienced at the majority prom. But like all segregated outcomes and events, these proms left the majority untouched and uninformed. The real power of Guinier's alternative remedies is that they honor diversity but also may create room for minorities to disrupt the majority bastion.

The task of building community across these often divided lines is a grass roots project. We need to see the gay and lesbian "voting bloc" as including family, friends and other supporters and urge the people in our lives to cast votes for our issues. It is a project that must move from the bottom up rather than the top down, and requires that we see our movement as having as much to do with issues of social and economic justice as it does with ending discrimination against lesbians and gays in the military. It means that it is as appropriate for lesbian and gay organizations to speak out against the Persian Gulf war as it is for us to speak out against anti-gay initiatives. It may mean that in making contributions to political candidates, we ought to be as concerned about those candidates' positions on abortion and welfare reform as we are about their support for the federal civil rights bill.

The recent New York City school board elections provide an inspiring example of the success of a multicultural coalition of sexual and racial minorities. In that election, voters elected a broad slate of progressive candidates, including lesbian and gay candidates, who supported the "Rainbow curriculum" and other progressive issues. By emphasizing class and race issues, like school overcrowding, and issues of sexuality, this coalition was able to achieve what none of the groups standing alone could have achieved. This achievement stands in sharp contrast to the Rightwing's efforts in that election, and across the country, to pit other oppressed groups against lesbians and gays.

True democracy is a multicultural project. The lesbian and gay political agenda overlaps in many respects with the agendas of other progressives and the vast potential for creating multicultural alliances is still untapped. Opportunities for coalition-building seem especially promising in the area of civil rights and domestic partnerships, where straight unmarried couples stand to gain. Black voters are often more supportive of gay rights proposals — such as nondiscrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation and the right of lesbians and gays to serve in the military — than are white voters.

It is no accident that the Right sees our interests and the interests of other progressives as closely linked, and indeed has tried to capitalize on the connection between our movement and the ideas of Lani Guinier. Not surprisingly, the hostile media coverage of Guinier's nomination closely paralleled its coverage of Roberta Achtenberg's nomination to the post of Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development for fair housing. The media characterized Guinier and Achtenberg as "controversial interest-group advocates" and blamed Clinton's support of "homosexual rights" for his waning support among moderate Democrats. Although Achtenberg survived the nominations process, Clinton abandoned both Guinier and gays in the military in his desperate effort to duck the Right and find the middle ground.

The reaction of the Right, the media and the Administration is ironic, given that Guinier does not advocate a take-to-the-streets agenda. In urging a "more consensual, deliberative and participatory democracy" and "fundamental reform of the substance of political decisionmaking," she seeks to revolutionize through reform and structure a process for creative change within our pluralist tradition. In stark contrast to the cynicism of the Right, she holds out the hope that all voters — gay and straight — will come to see ourselves as part of a larger political project to make government more responsive to the people.

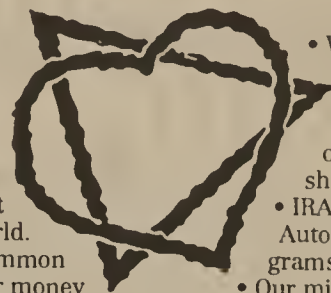
**Binny Miller teaches law at American University.**

## Is Your Money Where Your Heart Is?

It is important to invest your money in companies that have proven themselves to be responsible both financially and socially. It is important for you and it is important for the world.

At Working Assets Common Holdings we invest your money in companies that are successful, stable, and have a positive history of caring for people and the planet. We specifically screen for their record on Lesbian and Gay issues.

• Working Assets has six mutual fund portfolios to meet a range of investment objectives.



• We are the only mutual fund to give family discounts to the domestic partners of our Lesbian and Gay shareholders.

• IRAS, 403B7 Plans, and Automatic Investment programs are available.

• Our minimum investment is \$250.

Please call us for a no-obligation prospectus with complete details of fees and expenses. Please read it carefully before you invest or send money.

**800-223-7010**

*Secure the future with socially responsible investing.*

**WORKING ASSETS®**  
COMMON HOLDINGS

111 Pine Street • San Francisco, CA 94111

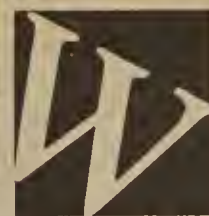
©1993. Distributed by Working Assets Capital Management.

## PRODUCTION & DESIGN

*Newsletters, Catalogs,  
Brochures, Advertising, Books*

Since 1989

Wayne Curtis



PO Box 1397  
Brookline, MA 02146

voice, FAX or modem:  
617-277-9474

**—Save these dates!—  
March 3-5, 1995, Boston  
OutWrite '95**

5th National Gay and Lesbian Writers' Conference

Panels, workshops, conversations, presentations  
and performances of importance and interest to  
gay and lesbian writers and readers

**Keynote address: Tony Kushner**  
**Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture: Cherrie Moraga**

For more information: **OutWrite '95**  
c/o GCN, 25 West Street, Boston, MA 02111  
**(617) 426-4469**

—watch for notices and application forms in  
the mail, in bookstores, in the usual places—



# Focussing on NAMBLA Obscures The Issues

## Our Beloved Gay/Lesbian Movement at a Crossroads

by Harry Hay

### speaking out

During the same two weeks that we beheld the most comprehensive summitry the 20th century International Gay and Lesbian Movement has so far achieved — the all-inclusive Stonewall 25 celebrations — we also witnessed a fracturing of our movement's middle class underpinnings, a rift which may unravel, if not tear apart, much of what we've gained in this century. The attempt by Gays and Lesbians to expel NAMBLA (the North American Man/Boy Love Association) from the Stonewall March and the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) prompts my comments. My commitment to Gay and Lesbian self-determination makes me ask, "Who is setting the agenda?"

During the days leading up to the march, a dissenting group called the "Spirit of Stonewall," held a press conference at the Stonewall Inn. We called upon the organizers of Stonewall 25 to reexamine the liberating principles of the celebration's namesake, the Rebellion of 1969, and reminded them that the original Stonewall uprising was a cry for full sexual freedom as a part of the struggle for social justice. At that press conference, I made the following comments:

I'm here today as a survivor as well as founder of the first ongoing Gay liberation group in the United States: the Mattachine Society, formed in Los Angeles in 1950. I'm here because things we discovered about ourselves, and the first principles we developed between 1950 and 1953, are now — forty years later — being trashed by Queers who don't know their own history. We decided from the beginning that having been almost obliterated for so many centuries, we wouldn't censor or exclude each other. If people self-identify themselves to me as Gay or Lesbian, I accept them as Brothers and Sisters with love. When we decided to rejoin the social and political mainstream, we were determined to integrate on our own terms, as we saw ourselves and with our own set of values. Otherwise, we would not integrate at all. And finally, we no longer permitted any heteros — nationally or internationally, individually or collectively — to tell us who we were, or of whom our groups should or should not consist. If necessary, we would assert the prior rights of collective self-definition and self-determination. We Queers would decide such matters among ourselves! Those statements, developed 42 years ago, still hold.

### Personal History

I am not a member of NAMBLA, nor would it ever have been my inclination to be one. Like most working class boys and most farm boys in those pre-WWII years, I went to work in the summer of my 14th year. This was still customary in the 1920s and 1930s, as it had been for my father in the 1870s and 1880s. Working as a man, as I was at 14 in the summer of 1926, I did what my peers did: I went to town with them on Saturday nights to speakeasies and cat-houses. Did I go in the cat-house? Yeah — once — yecchhhhhh. The rest of the summer I'd get a bit of a head on from the Speakeasy's Special (whatever it was, and it was better not to ask) and scuffle around with the guys in front of the Cribs. On the way home, one of the guys who had noticed I hadn't gone in with the rest of them, gave me what turned out to be a "pat" lecture on not letting those *mur-fadites* (a 19th and early 20th century lower-class street word for hermaphrodites) get near me or get me drunk. My Wobblie worker buddies taught me to wham anybody who bothered me hard and fast in the crotch with my knee or my elbow.

There is a reason for telling all this. The guys had been educating me for the last two summers in the basic principles of Marxism. They found out I was bright, so they figured I'd make a good labor organizer when I got out of school. When I left at the end of summer, they carefully instructed me how to shag a tramp steamer in Frisco going south, lending me an old union card so I could work my passage as a deck hand. That year, when I was 14 — big, lean, tanned, and toughened by heavy manual labor — I easily passed for 18 or 19. I was the perfect "jailbait!" One of my fellow workers was a 25 year old experienced seaman of many colors named Matt. In the course of that short haul, he provided me not only with my first glorious love-affair but also golden talismanic gifts that have strengthened and guided me all my life! I've never forgotten his gruff but tender warmth nor his self-affirming, simple but gleaming vision. So, having experienced intergenerational love (Matt didn't know I was 14), I know the enormous values and gifts (and heart-rending but healable griefs) it can bring.

### Which is Worse: Jesse Helms or Our Achilles Heels?

Jesse Helms, champion of Christian family values and our most intractable foe, is far shrewder than the self-appointed leaders of the Gay and Lesbian movement. Family value hawks like Helms can easily exploit our movement's own Achilles' heels: two glaring dichotomies we remain unwilling to face. First, we must acknowledge the vast differences in visions and values held by Gay men and Lesbians. Second, we must, as a movement, address the needs of our Gay/Lesbian youth whose experience of puberty, instead of providing a joyous self-realization and affirmational discovery, plunges them into a snake pit of self-loathing. And the adults of the Gay/Lesbian movement, lah-dih-dah, resist doing anything about it.

Helms has fought for years to remove the US from the UN by any means necessary; and he has fought to destroy the American Gay/Lesbian movement. In January of 1994, it looked like he'd be able to bean both birds with one shot by playing two, up to now, unrelated aims against one another.

### Enter ILGA into the United Nations

In the summer of 1993, the International Gay/Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), headquartered in San Francisco, after years of lobbying, won a "non-governmental consultative status" for ILGA at the United Nations. IGLHRC would serve as ILGA's "action secretariat." Enter Jesse Helms! Helms managed to pass through the US Senate (99-0) the following resolution:

Contributions to International Organizations shall be reduced by the amount of \$118,835,000 for each fiscal year, 1994 and 1995, and for each year thereafter, unless the President has certified . . . that no United Nations Agency or United Nations Affiliated Agency grant any official status, accreditation, or recognition to any organization which promotes, condones, or seeks the legalization of pedophilia, or which includes as a subsidiary or member of any such organization.

Helms didn't mention NAMBLA, but his meaning was quite clear. Likewise, he didn't name the European homosexual organizations (who have functioned as intergenerational groups since the turn of the century) who were also targeted. Of course, IGLHRC buckled at the first bark and demanded that Stonewall 25 expel NAMBLA from its ranks. The ensuing debate over this issue generated screaming and hollering all over the US, until

continued on page 18



# Children's Rights, Child Abuse and Gay Liberation

by Deeg

## speaking out

In the bad old, pre-Stonewall days, young gay people had to fear that if their gayness was discovered by their parent(s) they would be incarcerated in mental, religious, penal, or military institutions in order to "cure" or "correct" or "exorcise" their gayness. And that very real experience of many people who were involved in the early gay liberation movement meant that we had a very gut-level connection to the liberation of children. Since 1969 there have been some changes, however most of the threats to non-conforming young people still exist.

For lesbian and gay youth, the "age-of-consent" laws were a very real barrier to involvement in the movement. Many pre-Stonewall organizations, such as Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society, were not open to people who were under 18, because they feared legal prosecution as child molesters. This meant that young gay people came out without any support and those who had been thrown out of their parent's homes had no where to go. Young gay people, who engaged in relationships across the incredibly complicated age of consent lines, found themselves in prosecutable situations. For example, in some states, a sixteen year old in a relationship with a 14 year old was/is committing a serious felony which could result in a ten year prison sentence.

In this context, some of NAMBLA's program is consistent with gay liberation. NAMBLA has crusaded against age-of-consent laws, and against the concept that parent(s) have the right to determine what relationships their children engage in. NAMBLA recognizes that young gay people often have no where to turn in coming-out, and that sexual and social relationships with older gay people may be an important sources of social support for them. Many gay and lesbian youth come out with older gay people who they meet at the bars that they sneak into with false i.d. many of us/them who

continued on page 25

# ILGA DUMPS NAMBLA For Fling with NGO

by Jennie McKnight

## speaking out

Several years ago, while I was in the process of interviewing for a job at *Gay Community News*, I learned from my friend who was already on the staff that man-boy love was one of several sure-to-be-raised issues about which I should have a thoughtful thing or two to say. I wrestled with my mixed (and largely unformed) feelings about the subject, knowing I would be interviewed by a large group of gay men and lesbians representing widely divergent (and often bitterly conflicting) opinions. I figured that I needed to assure some (mostly but not exclusively male) members of the hiring committee that I would not abandon all coverage of groups like the North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), while convincing others that the pages of the paper would not be filled with "gay child abuse" propaganda.

I don't remember exactly what I said in the interview; it was probably something about how I have concerns about the potential for intergenerational relationships to be abusive, but that queers of various opinions on the subject should be informed about the issue in general and NAMBLA in specific so I would consider it part of my responsibility to include some coverage of the group. Ultimately my answer to the "NAMBLA question" probably mattered much less than how I responded to questions about porn or how the news coverage would include both gay men and lesbians and what my strategy was for making good on the paper's stated commitment to anti-racism. But my struggle with man-boy love and NAMBLA certainly did not end when the hiring committee offered me a job.

Recently, the "controversy" regarding NAMBLA's membership in the International Lesbian & Gay Association (ILGA) has reminded me again how much trouble lesbian and gay people have trying to come to any consensus about the issue of man-boy love. The ILGA events should also serve notice to all of us that homophobes have a pretty easy time getting gay "rights" activists to redraw the line marking who's in and who's out of the group deserving rights.

For those who may have missed the story, here it is: In July of 1993, several years of lobbying resulted in ILGA's recognition by the United Nations (UN) as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). ILGA is the first gay group ever to be officially recognized by the UN. NGO status means that ILGA can submit written statements to the UN to get them to address "human rights" issues affecting lesbians and gay men globally. At the time of the

original vote, the US backed ILGA's attaining NGO status and was considered by some to be influential among some other countries who were reluctant to vote ILGA in. But in October, the ultra-right Christian homophobes in Antelope Valley, California (the same people who brought us the video "The Gay Agenda"), revealed in their virulently anti-gay newsletter, *The Lambda Report*, that NAMBLA was one of the 300 or so groups belonging to ILGA. This juicy tidbit was picked up by the mainstream media, and caused the the US State Department to issue a statement blasting NAMBLA. Things started to look bad for ILGA when the US diplomats, who had earlier backed ILGA, demanded that ILGA "clarify" their relationship to NAMBLA, threatening to spearhead the movement to rescind ILGA's NGO status if NAMBLA (which had been a member of ILGA since 1984) wasn't out of there soon. ILGA met with representatives of NAMBLA to try to come up with a position paper on child abuse and pedophilia, but these efforts failed. The result: NAMBLA's 1993 dues were returned by ILGA and they were requested to resign from the group. Meanwhile, ILGA convinced the US delegation to hold off on taking any action until the group can figure out a way to get rid of NAMBLA. Once the shit hit the fan, gay and lesbian organizations began falling all over each other in the rush to condemn NAMBLA, including Stonewall 25, which isn't even a member of ILGA. One of my personal heroes, Barney Frank, warned that NAMBLA should be purged from ILGA as soon as possible to prevent a possible vote of condemnation in Congress (which could in turn, seri-

continued on page 29





'I read the *NAMBLA Bulletin* fairly regularly and I think it is  
**one of the most intelligent discussions of sexuality I've ever found.**

-Samuel Delany

\$25 for one year (ten issues);  
 \$10 low income. Sample copy \$1.

**nambla** North American Man/Boy Love Association  
 PO Box 174 ♦ New York, New York 10018

#### SEEKING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

### The **SAM** Project Sexual Abuse of Males

1 • 800 • 726 • 5011



- Are you a male?
- Are you at least eighteen years of age?
- Do you have a history of childhood sexual abuse?

• • •

If the answers are 'YES,' you can participate in an important study. In fact, this is one of the first studies to focus exclusively on the sexual abuse of males.

Call now for further information --  
 or to schedule a telephone interview.

- You remain anonymous.
- Your input will be confidential.
- Your contribution will be valued.

This research has been approved by the  
 Florida State University Institutional Review Board.

Josef Spiegel, MS  
 Principal Investigator

My insurance agency?

**JJBodner**  
 Insurance Agency, Inc.

**Of course!**  
 Quality service since 1959

8 Clarendon Street  
 617.437.9400  
 FAX 617.437.1815

**Member GBBC & BPA**

**Auto  
 Home  
 Business  
 Health  
 Life**

Hay continued from page 16

June 30 when ILGA convened in NYC with an agenda to expel NAMBLA from its ranks.

That whole hearing had been rigged in advance. When some of us "anti-exclusionists" (a more accurate term than "pro-NAMBLA-ites") argued that Helms' remarks were aimed at European groups as well as American ones, ILGA responded by saying, "he has no jurisdiction over Europeans." In so saying, they exposed themselves as middle class assimilationists with no knowledge of how ruling-class politics play out in "smoke-filled back rooms." Such irresponsible naiveté was unforgivable in our International Gay and Lesbian Brothers and Sisters. They were ignoring that the feckless, toothless caricature of a world parliament — the UN — needed American money in order to keep going and would do anything to get our moolah!

Even though NAMBLA had been one of ILGA's longest standing member organizations, ILGA voted NAMBLA's expulsion. When a NAMBLA youth delegate from Minnesota called for a Youth Caucus from the floor — a youth caucus includes ages 13 to 22 — it turned out that the youngest ILGA youth delegate was 24. Selling NAMBLA down the river was a short-sighted solution and it obscured the real issue of including and addressing the needs of our Gay and Lesbian youth. By appeasing Jesse Helms, the adults of ILGA said to the Gay/Lesbian youth of the world, "Fuck off! We've got more important things to do."

#### Intergenerational Exchanges

The Saturday before the Stonewall March, at the Irving Plaza Theater, young Gay and Lesbian folks, alternately furious or exuberant, in countless fascinating exchanges between audience and speaker, asked us elders what became of "sex" in the sexual liberation crusades being trumpeted for the last two and one half decades. Forty and fifty year olds squirmed. I stepped in to talk about the sexual climate of the Dark Ages. I told those too young to remember how, up to the 60s, even only what you said or mimed — even merely suggestive sexual language — could lead to time in state prison. Those who came of age in the more lenient 70s need to know this history. I suggested that the newer generation of Queers would like to relate to our Radical Faerie perspective: that our beautiful and lovely sexuality is the Gateway to Spirit! The movement leaders of today don't understand that the continuing call for Gay liberation is not merely a call for our political liberation; it should remain a call for our liberation as sexual people.

#### "Forward into the 'Real' World" — On Whose Terms?

On the following Wednesday and Thursday, during the ILGA Conference, it was horrible to have to watch the International Lesbian Delegates screaming "child molesters" and "monsters," joining their so-called feminist Gay Brothers in shoving and pummeling at those of us, not even necessarily NAMBLA members, who were against exclusion — particularly exclusion dictated by hetero hate-mongering politicians. It was heartbreaking for me to watch these people revert to ugly hetero-imitative behavior; heartbreaking for me to watch my beloved Minority crumbling from within, all from lack of a developed Gay-conscious principle!

At the beginning of this last and fateful "closed" plenary, Lisa Power, a former ILGA Secretary-General, described the early ILGA as "a ghetto solidarity group." She then explained that ILGA is changing. "We are now becoming a human rights movement and we are now a more effective organization." In urging the members to support the expulsions she said, "This is not a great day or a happy day for any of us, but we either go back into the ghetto or forward into the real world."

She does not say that "we will go forward as self-affirming, self-loving Queers into the real world." We are invited instead to assimilate into the dominant culture, reverting as usual to wearing the old hetero, escapist "human being" mask; a white, middle class one, natch! Well, ILGA Sister, you don't speak for me or for

**Selling NAMBLA down the river was a short-sighted solution and it obscured the real issue of including and addressing the needs of our Gay and Lesbian youth.**



millions of my Gay Brothers and Sisters worldwide! The Village in Manhattan (east or west), West Hollywood in LA, or South of Market in San Francisco — ghettos? They are neighborhoods, certainly, in which some of us live and thrive, and into which all of us occasionally need to withdraw: to lick our wounds, to comfort one another, to be comforted and to be spiritually restored. Then, refreshed and renewed in commitment, we are ready once again to take our places in the larger sphere. Our havens, ghettos? We are hardly so boxed in, either politically or socially, that we can't get out if we choose. That brave and pioneering "Camp Sister Spirit" in Mississippi, Sally Gearhart's "Wanderground" in northern California, and our several Radical Faerie sanctuaries in Tennessee, New York, Vermont, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Texas, Arizona, and Oregon are not ghettos. We'll thank you to be a little more respectful of other peoples' new horizons!

Forty-two years ago, my Mattachine Brothers and I saw, and my Radical Faerie Brothers still see, our work as taking place in the real world, with our own people, on our own Gay-conscious terms, and within our own Gay-conscious value-systems. We are the proud descendants of generations of gender



outlaws, Brothers and Sisters who have successfully demonstrated in their tribal societies for thousands of years. In each era, then and now, 3rd gender people, self-affirming, self-loving, proud and Queer, have served our many societies in life-enhancing, spirit-enhancing ways.

In the US, in the last decade, we have successfully applied our queer perspectives to political innovations. With the help of almost no one in the hetero establishment, and with little access to medical resources, we have taken care of our own in the AIDS holocaust. We have set an example, politically, for multi-cultural communities, helping them to side-step the cul-de-sacs obscured by obsolete democratic patterns. Groups of 3rd gender men and women have shown new political entities of multi-ethnic people non judgmental ways of functioning, through the process of loving, sharing consensus.

#### NAMBLA Was Never the Issue

NAMBLA was never the issue. The constitutional right of Gay and Lesbian groups to first class citizenship, of Gay and Lesbian individuals to practice political and spiritual self-determination was. It still is!

In the face of Jesse Helms' filthy-minded sneak attack, ILGA fell right into the Senator's lap. The resulting repercussions could unravel the movement. And appeasing the oppressor only teaches him a dangerous lesson: that he can win. Thirty days later, Helms let the other shoe drop. He

amended an education bill on its way through the Senate by denying federal funds to any public school district that teaches homosexuality is a positive lifestyle alternative through class work, textbooks, or counseling. This language is so broad that even Project 10, a nationally known counseling program for Gay high school students, would be a key target of the ban. How misguided ILGA seems in retrospect. ILGA swore that with the corpse of NAMBLA in his lap, Helms would be satisfied and do nothing more. Yet now he blithely banishes a socially beneficial youth counseling program with a 63-36 vote of approval from his fellow senators. C'est la vie!

In a time like this, the Gay and Lesbian movement should pull together and present an immovable phalanx to all attackers. Religious fundamentalism, based as it is upon the cleverly disguised sexual control of peoples' lives, is designed to spread hysteria. The Radical Rights' stampeding of state and federal political agencies during this time of confusion was fully predictable. During this period of economic uncertainty, when our standard of living — formerly based upon a larger share of global largesse than we're entitled to — has begun to fall, political and economic hysteria is on the rise. As members of the middle class try to hang on to the perks and privileges of their fading good life, they rush, as always before, to "cast their cares upon God." In so doing, they fall right into the traps set for them by Buchanan, Robertson and Limbaugh, those fundamentalist running dogs who present a new (and particularly American) face of neo-Fascism!

#### Sexual Coercion and Gay/Lesbian Kids

There is one way we can slap our hetero-parent community to its senses and re-unite ourselves at the same time. At the Spirit of Stonewall press conference I said, "Insofar as child molestation is concerned, the most common, yet unrecognized, form is the sexual coercion of Gay and Lesbian youth into heterosexual identities and behaviors. This is practiced daily by the whole national and international hetero community — parents, families, teachers, preachers, doctors, lawyers, and Indian Chiefs, not to overlook US Senators and the pooh-bah news media. This outrageous coercion of Gay kids into heterosexual identities and behaviors is not only sexually abusive, it is a spiritually devastating rape because the child, unknowingly, is led into self-loathing at the same time!"

For this gigantic criminal trespass — against not only today's youth, but all of us since childhood, from the Queers my age, 82, down through all the generations of Queers now reading this page, to the Gay kids still being bedeviled by heterosexual coercion — we, the international Gay and Lesbian People, should unite to sue the whole guilty hetero community for compensation! And, while we're at it, we should request our first class citizenship as well. Now that the statute of limitations concerning child molestation has been nullified, this could be the class action suit of the century!

Why not get cracking on this idea? Talk to your local ACLU. Think of the street theater we can devise — Glee into Rage into Laughter into Fury — at the snap of a limp wrist! And fun, too, as only we self-loving, self-affirming Queers know how to do it!

We can serve notice that once again in this dear land, we are here, as were the "strange brotherhoods" and sisterhoods of tribes past, before the pale-faced plunderers and marauders came. We are here, in our true dimension, with our Gay-conscious visions and values intact, with our split-level talents and four dimensional insights at the ready, our eyes alight with laughter, prepared to resume our community places and our collective responsibilities.

**Harry Hay is a longtime activist living in Los Angeles.**

## CRONES' HARVEST

**761 CENTRE ST JP, MA 02130**  
**(617)983-9530 TTY**

### LESBIAN PSYCHOLOGISTS

<b>Lennie Kleinberg, Ed.D.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Individual/Couples Therapy for Lesbian, Straight &amp; Bisexual Women</li> <li>❖ Sexual Identity Concerns</li> <li>❖ Hypnosis</li> </ul>	<b>Laurie Livingston, Ed.D.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Panic, Anxiety, Stress</li> <li>❖ Cognitive-behavioral Therapies</li> <li>❖ Travel, Performance &amp; Social Fears</li> </ul>
617-731-8539	617-734-5779
1131 Beacon Street, Suite 1, Brookline, MA 02146	

## Marea Murray LICSW

### Experienced Feminist Therapist

*Adult Children • Recovery • HIV/AIDS • Grief*  
*Sexual Identity / Concerns*  
*Relationships*

( 617 ) 267-6525 copley square  
Negotiable Fees  
Insurance Reimbursable • No HMOS

### TRIANTAFFILLOU & GUÉRIN, P. C.

*Representing the diverse legal needs of lesbians and gay men, their businesses and their families*

Katherine Triantafillou  
Denise M. Guérin  
Joyce Kauffman

101 Rogers Street, Suite 405, Cambridge, MA 02142  
TEL 617-577-1505, FAX 617-577-1012

**RICHARD D. LAHAM**  
REAL ESTATE CONSULTANT

### L & M ASSOCIATES BUYER'S BROKERAGE

TEL (617) 327-2345 FAX (617) 327-7835 RES. (617) 323-3459	313 BELGRADE AVENUE BOSTON, MA. 02131
---	---

## Transition House

Transition House is a multi racial, feminist shelter program for battered women and children. Call our 24 hour hotline at  
**617-661-7203**  
(TTY, several languages).

To sign up for our fall volunteer training, call  
**617-354-2676.**



# Are you HIV negative?

*Do you have a place to talk about how the epidemic affects you?*

*Are you concerned about staying negative?*

A group for gay/bisexual men who've tested negative meets the third Thursday of every month in Boston. Come regularly, occasionally, or just once to check it out.  
Free • New People Always Welcome • No Registration

Meetings are 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Upcoming topics:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Oct. 20 | Loving with HIV: Being a mixed status couple                     |
| Nov. 17 | In it for the long haul: Living a full life and staying negative |
| Dec. 15 | Open Discussion  |

**Fenway Community Health Center**  
7 Haviland Street • room 201  
Boston

617• 437• 6200 ext. 499



# When Is A Dildo A Hotdog?:

## Bringing Up Children In the Lesbian and Gay Community

by Cindy Rizzo

The Dyke March held last June in New York City during Stonewall 25 is already an event from which legends have been fashioned. A gay man lamented that he was thrown out by a menacing team of Lesbian Avengers. Cartoonist Alison Bechdel's recurrent characters were at the march, dispersed among the crowd. Unable to find each other, they ran into all sorts of fascinating women. I think, however, by far the most interesting story I heard was from my friends, a lesbian couple with an 8-year old daughter. They went to the Dyke March as a family, charged up by the energy of so many lesbians together and by the overpowering swarm of women that took over the streets, cops and permits be damned. The sights my friends saw as they marched downtown were just as amazing as those seen by the Dykes To Watch Out For crew. Most notable was a woman walking around with a dildo held in place by a harness which was worn over her clothing. She was soon followed by another woman with a dildo attached to her forehead.

"Luckily, she happened to be looking in the other direction when dildo #1 went by," my friend joked with relief, referring to her daughter. But #2 did not go unnoticed. "She asked me," continued my friend, "why that woman had a hot dog attached to her head."

I understood both my friend's amusement and her relief. I had been in New York myself that week with my 7-year old son attending various events that were part of the Gay Games. Occasionally I saw something that I wasn't very eager to explain, like men with pierced nipples or signs and buttons that referred to what my son would call "private parts."

Since my trip to New York and my friend's funny story, I've been pondering this dilemma, wondering how to manage the inevitable sticky situations that arise when Kid Culture meets Gay Culture.

Newspapers and magazines are filled with articles that decry the sexualization of the larger culture. They warn parents about the need to monitor our children's television and movie choices. They complain about Madonna and MTV. As a

The MIT Press Bookstore

## bad girls, sexual brains & other genders



### THE SEXUAL BRAIN

Simon LeVay

"Simon LeVay offers us an astonishing and engrossing portrait of the role of the brain in human sexual development. His conclusions transcend science; they have deep political resonance—especially for lesbians and gay men." — Thomas Stoddard, Coordinator, Campaign for Military Service; former Executive Director, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund

A Bradford Book, \$10.95 now in paperback

### THIRD SEX, THIRD GENDER

Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History  
edited by Gilbert Herdt

Whether examining London's Sapphists, "Female Soul(s) in Male Bod(ies)," Byzantine palace eunuchs, Native American berdache, the self-castrated Indian Hijras, Melanesian hermaphrodites, English "Mollies," "Intermediate Sexes," or American transsexuals, Third Sex, Third Gender emphasizes desires on the margins of society, and pleasures and bodies outside the assumed arenas of social reproduction.

Distributed for Zone Books. 320 pp., 35 illus., \$24.95 cloth



### BAD GIRLS

edited by Marsha Tucker

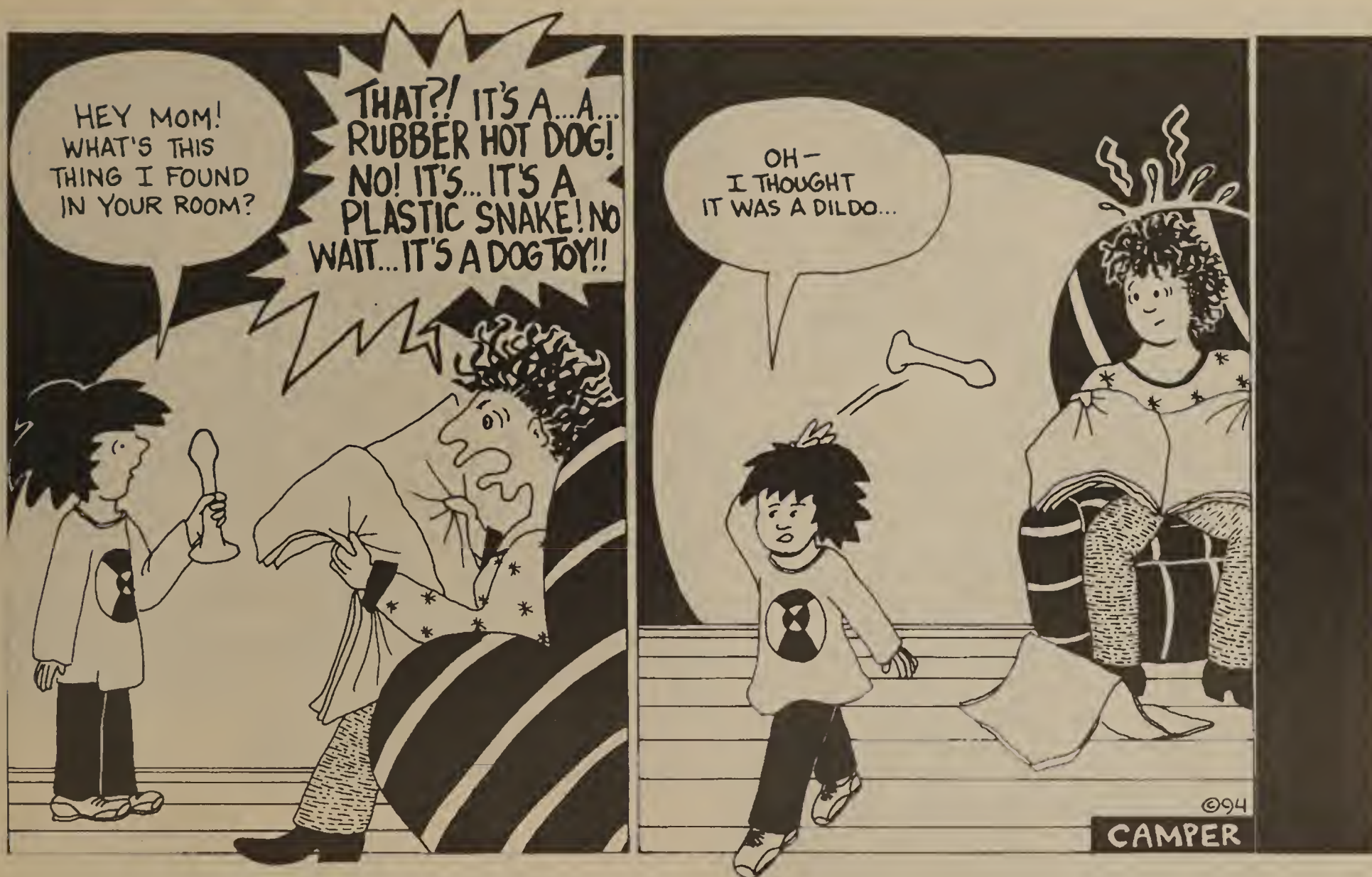
Unconventional and distinctly "unladylike," Bad Girls considers questions of gender, race, class, age and sex by challenging conventional ideas of motherhood, food, fashion, beauty, work, marriage, and psychoanalysis. Bad girls use humor as a subversive weapon and have a field day with cosmetic ads and transgressive bodies, while creating artwork their mothers wouldn't have approved of.

Distributed for The New Museum of Contemporary Art  
114 pp., 18 illus., 8 illus. \$19.95 original paperback

Published by The MIT Press.  
Available at fine bookstores

Kendall Square  
292 Main Street  
Cambridge MA 02142  
617 253.5249  
mitpbs@mit.edu





parent, I understand this kind of fear and know the importance of introducing my children to sexuality in an age-appropriate manner. But, frankly, my concerns about mainstream culture's sexual images have more to do with violence and misogyny than with sex.

I guess it would be easy just to lapse into some conservative, anti-sexual diatribe bemoaning the fact that our culture (that is, gay and lesbian culture) is too sexual to accommodate those of us with children. In fact, I think the culture needs to change to be more accommodating, but my ideas for change have more to do with things that fall outside the realm of sexual expression. My gripes include not including children's activities at large events, not offering low price tickets for kids at the Gay Games, not making childcare more accessible, and failing to respect the feelings and self-esteem of our kids by using terms like "turkey baster baby" or inquiring in front of a child over the age of two how he or she was conceived, if we know the father, or in the case of adopted children, where did they come from. Lesbian mothers should not be treated as if we are perpetually on Oprah. Oh, and another thing, couldn't just one music festival do something fair to those of us mothers who dare to parent the outcasts known as "boy children?"

This is an agenda that is worthy of our time and effort and one that does not try to push back the hard-won gains made, particularly over the past dozen years, to put the "sex" back into homosexuality. The women with the dildos are just not the problem. They are part of a solution; one that encourages us all to push the envelope on sexual choice and freedom. They are a reminder that we have turned the corner on the sexual puritanism and conformity that prevailed during the 1970s.

So while I'm clear about why these women did what they did, I'm not always so clear about how my kids and my friends' kids fit into this picture.

Most of the time, in both the straight and the gay worlds, it has been easy to make choices for my kids about what's an adult thing and what's a kid thing. I'm reconciled to the fact that, by and large, gay and lesbian culture is mostly an adult thing (although I think certain changes such as those I've mentioned could tip the balance a bit). Luckily, Pride marches are a perfect family event for us and the Gay Games (in spite of the ticket prices) were a terrific opportunity for my son to see incredible athletes performing at their best in a gay-positive atmosphere.

Happily, there are only a handful of occasions that amount to culture clashes — when kid meets in-your-face-sexuality. Some are easy to explain and even present opportunities to teach a good lesson. A woman at the Stonewall March walking through Central Park without a shirt on is only doing what any man has the right to do on a hot, summer day. "Oh," my son responded, "I thought she just wanted attention."

The inevitable, more difficult sights and the questions they provoke, represent a paradox that I and other parents will have to live with. Explaining the sexual diversity of our community to our children is just one of the many challenges lesbian and gay parents are confronting on the road to freedom. And as we learn from our kids and our times, this road is filled with uncharted territory. Unfortunately, neither the fancy, new books on lesbian and gay parenting nor Dr. Spock came with a map. So maybe, for a while, I'm gonna hold off on the explanations and finesse the situation a bit. It may not be the most liberated approach, but I guess, for now, there's just going to have to be one more dildo that will remain a hot dog.

Cindy Rizzo and her partner have two sons, ages 8 and 2 1/2. She is co-editor of a forthcoming book, *All the Ways Home: Short Fiction About Parenting and Children in the Gay and Lesbian Community*.

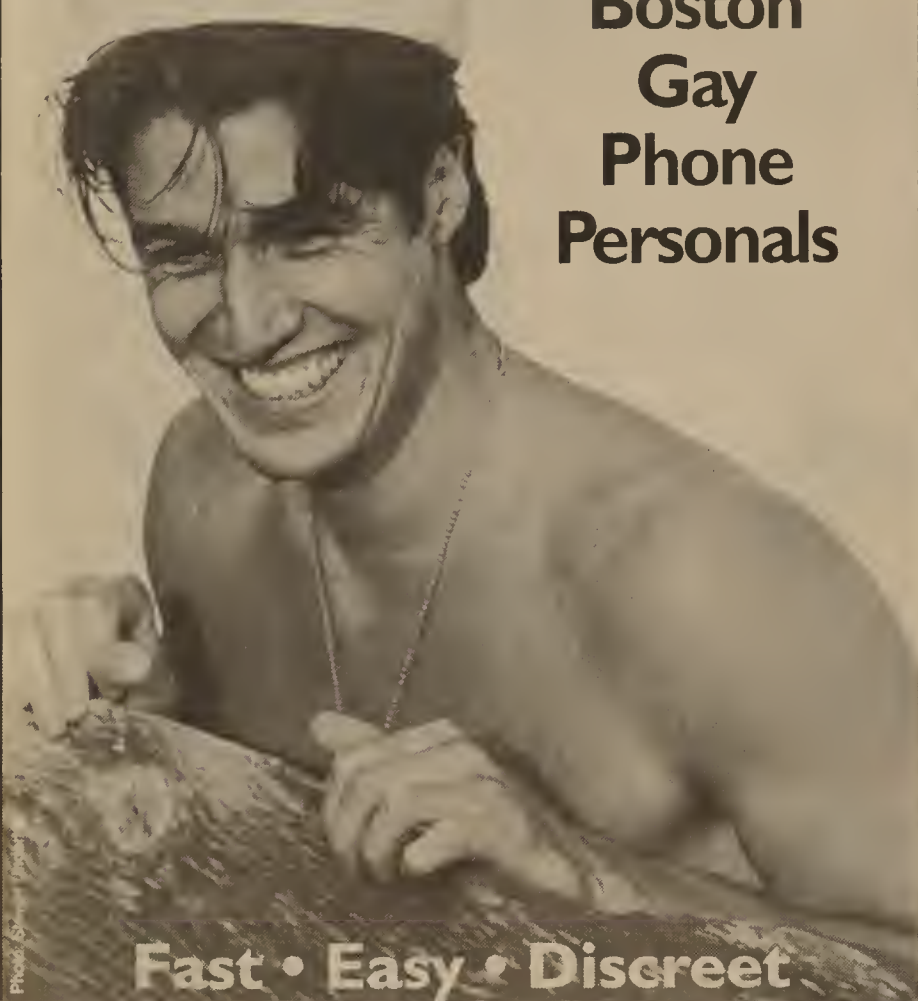
## RUDE GIRLS



*Rude Girls and Dangerous Women*, a compilation of cartoons by Jennifer Camper, NYC cartoonist and frequent GCN contributor, is now available through Laugh Lines Press. Costing \$8.95 and worth every penny of it, it is available in most bookstores. If your local outlet does not yet carry it, go in, and in tru Dyke Rule style, DEMAND IT!



**Boston  
Gay  
Phone  
Personals**



**Fast • Easy • Discreet**

**1-900-737-GAYS**

MANFINDER C/S: 415-281-3183, MUST BE 18+, \$1.99/MIN.

# Queer and Present Danger:

## Gay Conservatives, Sex and the Christianization of the Gay Movement

by Michael Bronski

Almost overnight the names and faces began appearing. In 1990, Marvin Liebman, architect of the US conservative movement came out and was heralded as a gay spokesperson. Andrew Sullivan, Tory, Catholic and editor of the neo-con *The New Republic* emerged as an expert on the gay movement and is quoted far and wide. Bruce Bawer, devout Christian, writer for the rightwing, extraordinarily homophobic *American Spectator* writes *A Place At the Table*. The book castigates the gay movement of which Bawer has never been a member, for its ideology, tactics and image and its author is quoted extensively in the straight press and given his own column in *The Advocate*. Now Mel White, an ordained minister who has made his living—as recently as two years ago—writing for Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and Ollie North writes his memoirs and is chosen as a speaker at Creating Change 1994, the progressive organizers conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. What does this new visibility for gay conservatives mean? Are we witnessing a narrowing of the “gay agenda”—a turning away from a broad notion of social justice? Are they really speaking for a large number of the community or is it just media hype—a new twist on an old story? And what does it mean that they are all devout, practicing Christians who see their gay identity and discussions of sex, activism, and coalition politics through the lens of a conservative Christian ideology?

As we move out of the first 25 years of the gay liberation/ gay rights movement and inch our way towards the millennium we face challenges we never imagined. After moderate success at changing the legislative profile of anti-gay sentiment in the US, we now find ourselves deluged by an onslaught of highly visible initiatives and referenda whose purpose is to make sure that no gay and lesbian anti-discrimination legislation can be enacted. These grass-roots movements are the direct result of a growing conservative political base that can trace its origins as far back as Goldwater's presidential campaign in 1960, and that flourished unchecked in the Reagan/Bush years. Over the past decade one of the most clear manifestations of this movement has been a revival of fundamentalist

**With determined focus, today's male is a man of few words, looking for direct expression of his sexuality.**

**No longer in check.**

**No longer in thought.**

**Just vibrating. Pulsating.**

**Demanding expression.**

The newest and finest man-to-man sex catalog offers a wide selection of studly sex toys to fulfill your every manly desire. Penis pumps, leather restraints, clamps, plugs, dildos, lubes, plus a large XXX gay video selection.

Full color 16 page catalog plus \$5 savings coupon only

(799) **\$5.00**

International Man **XXX** Video - sample the hottest hunks

(1023) **\$19.95**

**Order by phone!  
Order by fax!  
Order by mail!**

**(415) 896-0944**

**(415) 896-0933**

Male Instinct™

P.O. Box 77902

Dept. 4GCN100194

San Francisco, CA 94107-0902

9.5 Pacific Time  
Credit Card Orders Only  
7 Days, 24 Hours

**Free catalog  
with every  
video order!!**

**male instinct™**  
for the man in you





Mel White

Christianity (both Protestant and Roman Catholic) pro-actively engaged in political campaigns and organizing.

Concurrent with this we have also seen enormous changes in the gay rights movement. Once seen as a bastion of radicals, liberals and progressives we have reached an historical moment in which more conservative homosexual voices have centrally emerged: gay Republicans, the Log Cabin Club, gay evangelical Christians, the Pro Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians, and other conservative groups are all taking their place in the panoply of visible homosexual organizations. It would be foolish to pretend that before the mid-1980s the gay rights/ gay liberation movements held a single, unified politic; still a clear, active and united conservative voice was so rare as to be absent. The emergence of gay conservatism might be seen as the logical fruit of the gay movement: having created a space for more and more people to "come out," it was only a matter of time before ultra conservative groups would begin to emerge. But the emergence of a vocal gay conservative constituency might also be seen as symptomatic of the general "rightening" of US political culture: the gay movement is in no way immune to the enormous pull conservatism has exerted upon our national political and social consciousness. Both theories contain considerable truth but it is the second that not only explains the growing popularity of a conservative gay politic but also might point us in the direction of what to do about it.

**[He] was most active in the Christian Right during the time when it was sharpening its knives on women and gay people, with the primary goal of overturning the sexual liberation movements that now allow him to "come out" and be heard as "gay."**

The new breed of gay Christian conservatives—Andrew Sullivan, Bruce Bawer, Marvin Liebman and Mel White—have several things in common. They have never partaken in the gay liberation or gay rights movement. Bawer has nothing but scorn for it; Liebman and White have actively worked against it. They all hold to deeply conservative politics on social issues, particularly those surrounding civil rights and gay activism. Their views on sexuality distinctly counter the idea of sexual liberation. Instead, they speak of the beauty of sexuality in a "committed," "responsible"—and for White and Bawer, Christian—relationship. And

continued next page

# GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

# SUBSCRIBE

On a steamy June night in 1969, the drag queens and bulldykes boiled over. Together, in front of a bar named Stonewall, they challenged the status quo. In the riot heard around the world, lesbian and gay liberation began.

Just four years later, the Stonewall spirit of drag queens and bulldykes working together erupted in Boston. Gay Community News was born.

Since that time, GCN has been bringing the spirit of Stonewall to you. Challenging the status quo, both in our community and out. GCN speaking from the political margins to the cultural centers. You can be part of it. Join the revolution. Subscribe.

Send \$35 for the next ten issues.

- ☐ I enclose \$35 for the next ten issues
- ☐ I also want to make an additional, tax deductible contribution of \$
- ☐ I am unable to subscribe now, but please send me more information

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone ( )

Send with payment to:

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

25 WEST STREET BOSTON, MA 02111



they all claim that their conservatism is informed by and completely congruent with their deeply-held Christian religious beliefs.

Of all these men it is perhaps White who best exemplifies the contradictions and the splits we now see in the gay movement. Praised by himself and his own publicity machine—and now promoted within segments of our movement itself—as an important new gay spokesperson, White's life and career is at once a symbol and a warning of where the gay movement is going. In his memoir *Stranger at the Gate: To Be Gay and Christian in America*, White describes his public coming out as an act of religious, personal, and political salvation. His conservative Christianity so informs his views on homosexuality and gay politics that it is nearly impossible to make sense of the life—both then and now—outside of the social framework and reference of rightwing conservatism and evangelical Christianity.

White was born and raised in a conservative Christian home, brought up in conservative Christian schools and prepared at an early age to be a preacher. Although he knew he was gay from childhood, he married, fathered children, entered the ministry and quickly became successful when he applied his talent for writing and his knack for multi-media to his ministry. White's homosexuality surfaced and resurfaced through the years. He was attracted to men, sometimes even tricked, felt guilt and entered into a series of Christian-church "cures" that ranged from spiritual counseling to psychotherapy to electro-shock. By 1977, at the age of 37, he was beginning to act on his homosexual desires and by 1984 he was involved in serious homosexual relationships and identified—to himself, his wife and some close friends—as a homosexual. It was also during this time that he began doing his most serious work for the Christian, fundamentalist Rightwing.

#### Mel White's Double Think

One of the problems of grasping the historical importance of Mel White's memoirs is that what is most striking here is what is left unspoken. A great deal of this depends on White's simply rewriting history, or lying about it. While he constitutes the contemporary Religious Right as the worst enemy of homosexuals, he denies his involvement in its creation. White pinpoints the birth of the Religious Right—as a political movement that uses homophobia as one of its major tenets—to 1979 when Jerry Falwell founded his religious based, grass-roots money machine, The Moral Majority. And he is right. This was an important cultural moment in which the Religious Right and a network of US conservative movements, who had traditionally relied upon an anti-communist, anti-labor, anti-civil rights agenda, refocused their organizing to abortion and homosexuality. What White cannot or will not acknowledge is that this critical shift was directly connected to the gains that the gay movement and feminism had made in the prior ten years. Thus, he was most active in the Christian Right during the time when it was sharpening its knives on women and gay people, with the primary goal of overturing the sexual liberation movements that now allow him to "come out" and be heard as "gay."

Yet, by focusing so narrowly on the birth of the Moral Majority as the moment when Christian Evangelicalism turned politically conservative and activist, White distorts history. Although 1979 was a pivotal year in the development of the Religious Right, fundamentalist Christianity had always had a clear, activist, conservative social agenda: the Scopes "Monkey" Trial of 1925 and various legal battles about prayer in public schools and "blue laws" are the most obvious examples. White writes: "When I was a boy, only the mainline denominations...had demonstrated interest in influencing public policy. At that time most conservative Christians associated with evangelical...churches

didn't believe in getting involved in political action." Rather, Christian fundamentalism, as well as aspects of Roman Catholicism, have long attempted to influence public policy and impose their own moral codes on the rest of us. It was 1954 when the Pledge of Allegiance was changed to include the words "under God." The main thrust of *Stranger at the Gate* is an attempt to remove institutionalized Christianity from a political context, to isolate it—socially and culturally—as a personal choice that affects only believers. Thus, the only Christians responsible for the anti-gay attacks of the Religious Right are those, like Falwell and Robertson, who have recently singled out homosexuals as prime, and marketable, targets.

This sentiment is echoed by Marvin Liebman in his autobiography *Coming Out Conservative*. He argues that up until the confluence of the Religious Right and the Republican Party in the late 1970s the conservative movement in the US was simply concerned with "fiscal responsibility" and anti-Communism. Liebman—who promoted the CIA-engineered assassination of Salvador Allende, the democratically elected president of Chile, and was

**The main thrust of *Stranger at the Gate* is an attempt to remove institutionalized Christianity from a political context, to isolate it—socially and culturally—as a personal choice that affects only believers.**

a founder of such rightwing, racist, gay-baiting groups as Young Americans for Freedom—steadfastly refuses to admit that the US conservative movement, from the 1950s onward, worked to defend the "traditional" family, to limit personal, sexual and reproductive freedom and to reestablish strict sexual and gender roles.

What this distortion of history allows is the emergence of such conservatives as White and Liebman as "good gays"—men who were oppressed by a homophobic culture, made to hate themselves, and who finally found the will to "come out." In this way, they excuse themselves and all of their actions that have been harmful to lesbians and gay men, gay rights, gay liberation and other progressive causes.

#### Living In The Material World

The sympathetic, idealized self-portraits of White and Liebman are predicated on the oppression that both men experienced as closeted homosexuals. Liebman was court-marshalled from the Army when he was suspected of being a homosexual. White put himself through a horrendous series of "conversion" treatments in an effort to become an ex-gay. The isolation of being an outsider is painful enough, but public humiliation, personal denial and electro-shock will elicit sympathy from even the most hardened anti-conservative reader. No one ever said it was easy to come out and both White and Liebman's stories testify to that fact. But *Stranger at the Gate* gives you another side to the difficulties of White's coming out process. From early in his career White had enormous success in his ministry: his own television shows, trips to Europe, personal and financial fame.

Early in *Stranger at the Gate* Mel White recalls

being a high school student and seeing Billy Graham preaching before sell-out crowds at San Francisco's Cow Palace. He describes how he sat there "with tears streaming down my face, wanting more than anything in the world to be like Mr. Graham." He got his wish and acquired both Graham's religious insensitivity and hypocrisy as well as the cold, hard cash. The Whites lived privileged, lavish, entitled lives—certainly in relationship to most evangelical Christians, particularly Southern Baptists, who come from the lower-middle, working and unemployed classes. *Stranger at the Gate* is filled with descriptions of island vacations, cruises, good meals and trips to Europe. Liebman's *Coming Out Conservative* has similar counterparts. His brief career as a theatrical producer in London is filled with the oohs and aahs normally associated with movie star bios. At one point Liebman actually writes: "Bill and Pat [Buckley] opened up a whole new world to me, one that I never would have experienced without them. This was the world of the rich and famous, sailing trips through the Caribbean, and the Greek islands, ocean liners to every part of the world, trips to Morocco, Spain, the Soviet Union, Italy, Switzerland, South America, everywhere, wonderful fun people."

White's and Liebman's material rewards are part and parcel of the general history of Christian Evangelism as well as the modern world of Evangelicalism. The financial empires of Jim and Tammy Baker, the extraordinary wealth of Jimmy Swaggart and Pat Robertson are as much a product of Reagan-era greed as the S&L scandal and massive deregulation. (Liebman, on the other hand deals with it like a queen on a celebrity binge: it's simply fabulous.) Reading through *Stranger at the Gate* one wonders if Mel White's difficulty in coming out was due less to social homophobia than to his reluctance to give up the substantial privilege, access, money and fame that he had accumulated as a well-heeled, presumably-heterosexual, conservative, Evangelical media personality.

Indeed, as late as 1991, White was still actively supporting, promoting and writing for—even writing as—such prominent hard-line, homophobes as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and Oliver North. His involvement continued long after he had settled his sexual identity crisis and had moved in with his full-time lover Gary Nixon. White, you see, was a victim of society's homophobia and had little control over his actions. And White was not the only victim. On page 147 of *Stranger at the Gate* we read: "...Jerry [Falwell] is still using homosexuality to raise money and mobilize support. I hate that his ignorance and superstition leads to the suffering and death of my brothers and sisters, but I understand how he was terribly misled. Like myself, Jerry is a victim of other victims. We both grew up surrounded by well meaning Bible-believing Christians who had never really tried to understand in our modern context the ancient passages used now to condemn homosexuality."

#### Strangers to History

Mel White's Christianity is, apparently, a religion of supreme forgiveness and a religion that completely refuses to admit responsibility for sin (aka known as thoughts, words or actions that led to great harm). It is no accident that the epigram for *Stranger at the Gate* is "I was a stranger and you took me not in..." The speaker is, of course, Jesus. Mel White portrays himself as the ultimate good guy victimized: Mel on the Cross. The paradox here is that White is as fervent a Christian now as he was in his youth. The same religion that made him a victim—and causes the suffering and deaths of his brothers and sisters—still empowers him (and one presumes Robertson, Falwell et al.)

Today Mel White calls on his Christian brothers and sisters to look to their faith for guidance, and



repeatedly urges gay men and lesbians to form Christian, monogamous relationships. The reality is that White's approval of gay sexuality is completely bound by the parameters of his fundamentalist Christian perspective. This would exclude such, relatively vital, activities as casual sex and sex outside of relationships. White's quest is to create a social space and freedom for a Christian notion of gayness. One which most of us, including non-practicing Christians, would find appalling and destructive.

It is no accident that the power of the Christian Religious Right is on the ascendancy in our new conservative political landscape. The history of Evangelical Christianity (as well as prominent Roman Catholic leadership) has always been anti-progressive, demanded strict adherence to traditional sexual and gender codes and has attempted to influence, as much as possible, any movements that push social policies toward greater freedom. This conservative landscape has deeply affected the gay and lesbian movement. While we have created space for homosexuals of many beliefs, politics, and backgrounds to come out we have also allowed our movement to slip to the right. Pushed into a more and more defensive position by the profoundly homophobic, racist, sexist and anti-progressive political/Christian Right, we have expanded our parameters to include, even promote, those who—not two years ago—were actively working against even the narrowest idea of gay rights. The gay movement is not owned by anyone, but it is vital that it retain a political perspective, that it continually acknowledge who has power and who is using power against us.

One of the most maddening aspects of *Stranger at the Gate* is that Mel White never acknowledges—not once—that we have a fine, resilient history of struggle and freedom fighting—that for at least 45 years a diverse community of activists have attempted to make the world a better place for homosexuals. To do so would force him to place his own despicable actions into a different historical context. One of the recurrent images that runs through *Stranger at the Gate* is the persecution of homosexuals by the Third Reich. White has dreams about his family being killed by Nazis. He states that Falwell and Robertson use the propaganda techniques of national socialism. He warns that we are moving towards another era of anti-gay persecution like that of Nazi Germany.

This constant refrain is unsettling. Not only because he barely mentions the systematic extermination of European Jewry, but because his complicity with so much of the Religious Right for so long clearly places him on the wrong side. White would have us believe that institutionalized Christianity—except for those people who misunderstand a couple of Biblical passages—is a boon and a salvation for everyone. White's religious beliefs eliminated his need to have a political analysis or any understanding of how power operates in our lives. If we are to move ahead to claim our sexual freedom, we are going to have to rely on politics, not faith and on that strong history Mel White refuses to recognize. We are going to have to rely on our broadest vision of social justice for this country. We are going to have to rely on our ability to hold accountable

**Michael Bronski is the author of *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility* and *Gay and Lesbian Culture* forthcoming from Chelsea House. He is a columnist for *Z Magazine*, *Firsthand*, and *The Guide*. His articles have appeared in *Radical America*, *Boston Globe*, *Fag Rag*, *The Village Voice*, *Steam* and the *Advocate*. He is the program coordinator for Outwrite '95.**

Deeg continued from page 17

came out in this way feel positive about those relationships, and the role they played in our/their lives.

#### What About Child Abuse?

But when we hear NAMBLA advocate "inter-generational sex," we cringe. Twenty-five percent of all girls have been sexually abused by the time they are 14, and the idea that a "gay liberation" organization would be in any way justifying this behavior makes us angry and alienated. Of course, NAMBLA is talking about "consensual sex." Let's make it really clear: there is no such thing as a fully consensual relationship between people who have such widely divergent power in this society as children and adults do. Property cannot "consent."

This society sexualizes children and we're not talking about child pornography. We're talking about Brooke Shields and Levis ads, and the reason that so many men are suddenly interested in girls gymnastics and women's figure skating. Children, seeking to survive their potentially life-threatening status as property, euphemistically called "childhood," use any and all of their resources, including the attraction that adults feel for children. Thus, it may be the case that the child "initiates" the sexual contact. That does not make it consensual.

The rumors about NAMBLA abound. That child pornography and prostitute rings operate through NAMBLA. That it organizes sex tours of Third World countries where there are boy prostitutes. Whatever it is that NAMBLA does or doesn't do, and we find it kind of hard to believe that an above ground organization as heavily infiltrated and surveilled as NAMBLA is can do much, the few hundred members of NAMBLA are not the major perpetrators of child sexual abuse. By concentrating attention on NAMBLA, whatever its bad politics, society is free to ignore that one-third of the perpetrators of child sexual abuse are parents or other relatives, and one-third are acquaintances such as clergy and baby-sitters. Few, if any of these people are members of NAMBLA.


NAMBLA points to many adult gay men who describe early, even pre-puberty relationships with other men as being "the best thing that ever happened" to them. Unfortunately, given how badly this society takes care of children, it isn't a hard statement to believe. A kind and caring man, whatever the services he requests as the price for his attention, may be the best thing that has happened to a boy in his life. But that doesn't make it consensual, and it sure as hell doesn't make it liberation.

#### When Children Are Free

The fundamental issue in the NAMBLA debate is the right of all people, whatever their age, to form non-oppressive relationships as they choose. Because lesbian and gay relationships exist outside of the heterosexual nuclear family, our liberation is fundamentally linked to the liberation of children, who are primarily controlled through the nuclear family. Unfortunately, in our communities' fight for equal rights, the mainstream gay organizations have limited themselves to the much more narrow fight for "our right" to own children on an equal basis with straight people.

Children are not property. They are living, feeling, thinking beings who should have the right to determine their own lives, and form whatever relationships they choose. When children are free, some may choose to have sexual relationships with adults. But that will be a different culture and a different context. For now, we say if the men of NAMBLA truly care about boys, let them fight for the boys' rights to define their own relationships with other boys, and to live in a society free of ageism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other oppressions.

Deeg writes for OUT! and is active in LAGAI.

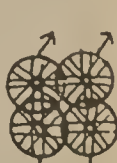


351 Broadway  
Cambridge, MA  
(617) 868-3392

**We will teach you how to fix your own bike.  
You may use our shop space and tools.  
Or you can leave your bike to be repaired.**

No appointment necessary  
Call for hours. Closed Mondays.

*Proud of Who We Are for 23 Years*



*Materials for Peace, Freedom & Social Justice*

**BUTTONS DECALS T-SHIRTS POSTERS  
POSTCARDS BUMPERSTICKERS BOOKS**

**DONNELLY/COLT**

**PROGRESSIVE RESOURCES**

RAINBOW FLAGS Box 188  
Hampton, CT 06247  
203-455-9621  
Fax 800-553-0006

Kate Donnelly  
Clay Colt

## NOW RECRUITING

National corporation expanding in the Newton, Massachusetts area. We are recruiting three people who are honest and neat to call on our present customers and contact potential new accounts. Benefits plus earning potential of \$250 per week while learning.

**Call 617-527-3224**

QueerWorld continued from page 5

setting," and the other is "a witty snapshot of gay men cruising" filmed in Soho's Freedom Cafe.

"For the first time, safer sex adverts made by gay men for gay men will screened on national television," said Peter Scott of GMFA. "We are proud and delighted at this singular achievement."

#### Malaysian TV Bans Lesbian/Gay Artist

**KUALA LUMPUR**—Two of the three Malaysian television networks have officially banned gay people and cross dressers from broadcasts, according to the Star newspaper here. Information Minister Mohamed Rahmat announced in September that, "Any artist who is proven to be a gay will come under the ban. We do not want to encourage any form of homosexuality in our society." Both of the television networks are controlled by the state's Information Ministry.

#### Russia Pushes Mandatory Testing Bill

**MOSCOW**—Legislation mandating HIV testing of anyone suspected of belonging to a "risk group" has passed a first reading in the Russian Parliament, according to UPI. The law would also impose testing on foreigners who stay in Russia more than a month.

The forced testing would apply to "citizens who according to epidemiological indicators threaten massive spreading of HIV infection." Russian AIDS activists say they consider gay people to be the primary targets of the bill. The activists point out that nearly half of the 740 people officially registered as HIV positive were infected by the use of contaminated needles in Russian hospitals.

Queer World was compiled by Stephanie Poggi, with thanks to Marla Erlen's E-mail, Rex Wockner and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.



# BOOKS: No More Happy Endings

The Weekend by Peter Cameron, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1994

Try by Dennis Cooper, Grove Press, 1994

House Rules by Heather Lewis, Doubleday, 1994

Red Azalea by Anchee Min., Pantheon, 1994

Reviewed by Andrea Freud Loewenstein



When I published my first novel in the good old/bad old days of 1984, lesbian and to a far lesser extent gay novels were, with a few notable exceptions, relegated to the gay/lesbian small presses or to those small presses with a leftist and/or feminist outlook. Like other lesbian authors, I was well aware of the unspoken rules that governed that market. Rita Mae Brown, author of best-seller *Ruby Fruit Jungle*, spelled some of them out in her essay, "Happy endings for lesbians," in which she condemned the "gloom and doom" school of previous lesbian novels and urged fellow dyke writers to project a positive self image. She herself led the way by offering us a model hero in Molly Bolt. The adopted child of a poor white Southern family, Molly possessed, apparently from birth, feminist and anti-racist ideals, an ability to discount societal pressure, a strong positive identity as an out lesbian, and a healthy enjoyment of her lesbian sexuality. Only strengthened by the abuse and rejection of her adoptive mother, Molly grew into the power dyke most likely to succeed: brilliant, creative, highly attractive and ambitious, she strode proudly toward her happy ending. Molly despised those unenlightened lesbians who remained in the closet, indulged in role playing, or practiced ritualized or otherwise non-orthodox sex. In the next fifteen or so years, Molly was succeeded by countless somewhat less perfect sisters, most of whom suffered considerably more traumatic coming out experiences before emerging into the healing, nurturing community. Still the rules remained the same, and those writers who broke them knew that if they managed to get published, they risked scorn or even ostracism from what some of us blithely and arrogantly referred to as "*The Lesbian Community*."

Needless to say, things have changed. A faltering economy and atmosphere of conservatism eliminated most small presses (again with some valiant and notable exceptions) and caused a growing tendency by mainstream houses to accept only sure money-makers, making it even more difficult for unestablished gay and lesbian authors to publish. At the same time, the phenomenon of the "crossover" gay or lesbian novel, usually nurtured along by a gay, lesbian or homophobic editor within one of the large houses, has proliferated, and the rules have most definitely changed. There is little room in these novels—intended to appeal to an avant-garde, alienated and bored audience of any and all sexual persuasions—for a positive character like Molly Bolt. Pain, alienation, and sexual extremes are in, to the delight of some authors and the dismay of others, and books which do not offer them must stand out as unique in some other way to qualify for mainstream publication.

Of the four books I review here, each was published by a large press, and each was widely reviewed in mainstream publications. None reveals itself in the blurbs on the back cover; if you don't already know, you won't find out this way. In none of these books is coming out an issue, and none of them portrays a gay or lesbian community, instead presenting us with a thoroughly integrated world where gays, straights and bisexuals mix freely. What does separate these four books from one another is their modernity or lack of it. While two of them seem to have skipped both the earlier rule book and the current emphasis on alienation—looking to an earlier novelistic framework for inspiration—the other two are located in the highly modern world of profound alienation, cynicism and despair.

I heard Heather Lewis, author of *House Rules*, and Dennis Cooper, author of *Try*, in a reading of "transgressive" fiction at Soho's Drawing Center. The evening's *objet d'art*, hanging suspended from the central beam, was a large tank containing a giant clam, a crab, and a crayfish, all slowly drowning in about an inch of water and, with their writhing movement, setting an appropriately trans-



# HOUSE RULES

HEATHER LEWIS

RED  
AZALEA  
ANCHEE  
MIN



gressive tone. The first author in the assembly, William T. Vollman, read about (heterosexual) sex with prostitutes and almost freezing to death in Antarctica; perhaps in case these themes should prove insufficiently engaging to the highly fashionable audience assembled, he shot a gun off in the middle of his reading. Vollman's desperate characters, forced to near-death experiences as a way to escape their terminal numbness, mixed easily with the other characters on the scene that evening. Alienation provided a far more effective bond than that outdated concern, sexual orientation.

In Dennis Cooper's *Try*, the latest in his series with a common theme, all the characters are comfortably well off, world weary, white Californians, either male boy-lovers or their teenaged objects of affection. Cooper is a brilliant observer of social milieu: his precise and mocking rendition of the artifacts and idiom of his characters' lives, as well as his spare, speedy prose, gives *Try* a surprising energy and readability, considering its macabre subject matter. The third person present narrative, almost bare of description and consisting mostly of inner, outer and phone dialogue, focuses mainly on Ziggy, the teenaged adoptive son of two gay men (since separated) who have been beating him up and sexually abusing him since the age of eight. The adolescent Ziggy is smart, hip, bisexual and self-conscious. While on heroin, in the midst of being fucked by his two Dads, he understands

*like for sure, that a huge part of...sexual abuse, at least for him, is how he loves being a target for such intense feelings... That's why he hasn't killed Brice, or hired a hitman like other abused-type teens do.*

Eager to preserve this insight in his Zine, a witty exploration of sexual abuse called "I Apologize," Ziggy considers interrupting his busy Dads to ask for paper and pencil, but cannot focus enough for the effort. Though sympathetic, Ziggy is not an entirely reliable narrator, and he knows it. As his school therapist has informed him, and he tells the

Dads, "I'm so fucked up now by my psycho upbringing, and uh, the molestations and stuff, that my whole personality's like, about using other people." To help us interpret his speech, "rushed, inarticulate, vague, loosely poetic - a 'music' I cherish in all teens" Cooper offers us the voice of Roger, the other Dad. His first person narrative is so pompous and inauthentic ("May I note a discrepancy of sorts between the sex I'd been having with Ziggy to this point in time, and my scanty recountings?") that it sends us back to Ziggy with relief. And it is through Ziggy's unshockable perspective that we watch a pornographer participate in a complicated rite that ends in the death and necrophilic fucking of a twelve year old boy. Just as his Dads have tricked Ziggy into enjoying abuse, Cooper has, through his unreliable and shifting narration, made us as readers somehow accessory to this act, snaring us into a blase, trendy acceptance of the unacceptable.

The sexuality in *Try* is thoroughly unappealing; the gritty lingering on the smells and textures of dirty teenaged assholes and the mockery of those who get off on them remove any possible romance, even for the most fervent of boy-lovers. Neither is it an expose of sexual abuse. Instead it's a clever, trendy bit of undermining, which leaves us smirking uncomfortably, fascinated and repulsed at once.

The main character and narrator of Heather Lewis's first novel, *Class Rules* is also a sexually abused teenager who finds a girlfriend guaranteed to help her along in her process of self-destruction. Like Cooper's bit of California, the horse show world in which Lee moves is a deeply cynical one; honorable show riding has been discarded for the more dangerous and less skilled high jumping, and everyone, both horses and humans, is constantly drugged. As in *Try*, sex in *House Rules* when not numbing is frightening and painful, escalating easily into a violence that Lee understands and courts, just as Ziggy has learned to court abuse. But while Cooper's prose has a breathless, hypo-manic quality to it, Lewis's Lee never changes tone nor tempo. Instead, bleakly and without noticeable affect, she narrates one unbearable event after another. On a

plane heading for the familiar world of the horse show circuit, after she has been caught with drugs and expelled from boarding school, Lee sits passively while the repulsive man in the next seat rams his finger into her. As she puts it, "The thing is this stuff follows me around and once it starts I can't move till its over." The same could be said of the narrative here. While it is logical that a character like Lee should speak to us in a numb, affectless way, and we do infer her inner pain whether or not she expresses it, the endless monotone wore me out. I sympathized with her plight and felt angry at her abusers, but I eventually had enough of Lee, her even more ruined girlfriend Tory, and the cruel and sadistic couple into whose hands they fall. Only the horses are well-meaning, and they, of course, come to a bad end.

Both Ziggy and Lee must beware of feeling love or sexual arousal; these feelings lead to a kind of catastrophic inner explosion which Lee names "that too big feeling" and Ziggy calls an emotion bomb. To convey such a numb world is not easy, and although Cooper's book is far more reader friendly, Lewis's does have its own relentless pull.

In Anchee Min's novel *Red Azalea*, emotion bombs are not to be avoided but rather to be nurtured and treasured in a world where passion of any kind (except that directed to Mao and the nation) is strictly prohibited by the authorities. A classic tale of star-crossed lovers who defy the powers stacked against them, this book's uniqueness lies in its setting: a bleak swampy women's work camp during the cultural revolution in China. Every detail of *Red Azalea*, down to the last leech and the last dogmatic pronouncement, rings true. Min's characterizations are sharp and unsparing, especially her self-portrait as a sensitive but flawed young woman, coerced as a young girl into turning in a beloved teacher, and later using her beauty as a tool for survival and even advancement in an impossible system.

Min came to the United States from China with no English in 1984, and she has claimed the language for her own. Thus Little Green "spread pig



shit as if she were organizing jewelry;" Yan, who is a "poor mouth fighter" curses her rival, Lu, who has wrinkles "climbing up her face" by calling her "Spoiled rice shoot, pig ass, mating worm." The short staccato sentences with their unique idiom are especially effective when Min describes the long courtship and growing lust that builds between herself and her squad commander, Lu. A rugged, handsome woman who can plant five fields in the time it takes others to plant one, Lu reveals her inner self by playing sweet music on the ehru in a deserted factory site. She is tough on the outside but tender on the inside, a butch any femme might fantasize about, and as in most romances, the anticipation is even hotter than the consummation. If this sounds cliched it is not; what would be cliché in most writers becomes rare music in Min's voice.

In a device that Shakespeare was particularly fond of, Anchee acts as amanuenses for Yan, composing love letters to a man on a neighboring farm for her. Yan asks Anchee "how Leopard Lee would react after reading one of these letters."

*I told her that he would fall in love with her. She told me to repeat what I had just said and I did. She whispered, How can you be sure? I whispered back, If I were a man, I would. She asked if I ever tasted pellet fruit. I asked what pellet fruit was. She said it was a type of fruit that grew in the South. When it ripened it cracked itself open, making pang-pang-pang sounds like firecrackers. She said this was how her heart was beating now.*

As the two young women, having complained of cold, share a mattress under a mosquito net, Yan sighs in frustration.

*Too bad you are not a man.....What would you do if I were? I asked. She turned back to face me and said she would do exactly what I had described in the letter. Her breath was hot. Her eyelashes touched my cheek. A warm stream gushed from my feet to my head.*

It is, of course, partly its forbidden nature that makes this love so compelling. What is forbidden is the defiant passion and sexuality, not particularly its homosexual aspect. Indeed, the word or concept "lesbian" seems to be unknown, and homosexual liaisons are if anything less punished in this society than heterosexual ones. In the last and least successful part of the book, Anchee, always looking out for her best interests, takes a male (though androgynous) lover who is able to further her ambitions, but her heart still belongs to Yan. Min's book, either because of its foreignness or its lack of naming, has not been publicized as a lesbian book. Nevertheless *Red Azalea* with its old fashioned plot and utterly un-modern fascination with life is the sexiest lesbian novel I have read for a long time, and the most compelling. Perhaps in a society where to wear a ribbon in one's hair is an act of courage, one need shoot off no guns to create excitement.

If *Red Azalea* evokes Shakespeare, Peter Cameron's novel, *The Weekend* seems to inhabit the

same graceful and leisurely space as a Henry James or an Edith Wharton novel. Indeed, throughout the two opening scenes I had no idea whether the setting was today or of sixty years ago. In the first scene we see a woman, Marion, leaving two sleeping people called John and Roland, to swim with great delight in the still river behind her house. In the second, a man, Lyle, waits for and then meets another man called Robert in a station and gets on board, "accompanied by a trainload of brightly dressed people." It is only when Robert hands Lyle coffee from "the cardboard wrap which also contained a Danish pastry smothered in plastic wrap" and when he explains to a jealous Lyle that the hiker who has been talking to him wanted to know where he got his hair cut, that I realized that the weekend in question takes place in the present. Lyle and Robert are new lovers traveling by train up the Hudson to visit Lyle's friends John and Marion and Lyle's baby godson, Roland.

As in Cooper's book none of these characters has to worry about money. But while Brice's house in Try is furnished, as Roger puts it, in "cut-rate theme-park-in-a-tract house, referencing the Old West...as romanticized and muted by Hollywood," we are in more distinguished company here. Marion and John's house is painted in a replication of the colors Jefferson used at Monticello, and the couple, as Lyle explains to Robert on the train, "live a life of leisure, to be perfectly honest, but they do it very well." Lyle himself is a well-known art critic and lecturer, and Robert, who is only twenty-four and waits tables to make money, is already a recognized painter. Although this is a short book, it is only gradually that we learn Lyle is in mourning for his lover, Tony, who died of AIDS in John and Marion's house. This trip marks his first weekend back since Tony's death.

There are no emotion bombs here, only the steady accumulation of detail. The precise naming honors and never sentimentalizes either the relationship or Lyle's grief, which comes and goes, summoned by a taste or smell or by some other, more minor grief. Helping Marion to change Roland's diapers, Lyle remembers:

*Tony had worn diapers, his last days, in this house. Lyle had thought that changing Tony's diapers would be like changing a baby's diapers, but it had not been. It had been like changing a grown man's diapers. It might have been better if Tony's illness had made him a baby but it had not. He had never stopped being himself.*

Later, after getting lost in the woods and crashing into a tree, he finds himself sobbing.

*He hadn't taken care of Robert. He could not take care of himself. Ever since Tony died. Tony had not taken care of him, but Tony's life set next to his had contained him somehow, had given his life form and function. But now his life spilled messily around him into the world. He was out of control without Tony. And Tony was dead.*

Cameron captures not only Lyle, but each of the seven characters with the same fine precision. He loves and respects his characters, even those who behave very badly, and honors them with his intimate, gentle touch. No one is mocked or belittled in *The Weekend*. But even more than individual feelings, he captures people in relation. These are not isolated, alienated characters, and none of them suffers from numbness. Their difficult interactions and the intense social discomfort caused when a new person is introduced into a web of established intimacy are so painfully and precisely rendered that I felt I had lived through this comparatively uneventful but excruciating weekend.

Unlike Anchee Min whose voice roars exuberantly through her novel, Cameron's voice is minimalist and always controlled. His characters are painters and art critics, and the book has something of the perfection of one of the more realistic impressionist paintings, with its luminescent colors and careful composition. Nevertheless, his end result is every bit as intense as hers. Like Min and unlike Cooper and Lewis, he is never bored with or disgusted by human beings, and both his fascination and respect are passed on to us as readers.

*The Weekend* contains one unexplicit but quite breathtaking gay sex scene, but sex is less important in this book than grief and social awkwardness. The society of artists, intellectuals and elegant older women with Roman villas seamlessly contains these distinguished gay men, and the word "gay" is mentioned only once, by the young visitor, Robert, an outsider whose explicit naming shatters Marion's cozy assumption of sameness. The word "AIDS" also never appears, although in Marion's vivid memory Tony does tell Marion he is HIV positive. Still, the relationships of Tony and Lyle, Lyle and Robert and even of Lyle as a gay man and Marion as a heterosexual woman make gay life and relations central to *The Weekend*. Cameron writes so beautifully that I trusted his indirectness where it would bother me in a writer whose voice I treasured less.

All of these authors know their craft, and the large presses can obviously afford the skilled editors small presses cannot always supply. None of the four novels suffers from carelessness or inconsistency of voice. It is also possible that modernity in its very nature is not meant to inspire or excite us. Nevertheless the fact remains that Lewis's and Cooper's novels left me cold, while Min's and Cameron's not only moved me, but satisfied that deep thirst I feel as an insatiable reader, and one thirsty for books that mirror my lesbian life and times.

**Andrea Freud Loewenstein is happy to find a home for her writing in her old friend and first publisher, *Gay Community News*. The author of two novels, *This Place* and *The Worry Girl* and one critical study, *Loathsome Jews and Engulfing Women*, she is Associate Professor of English at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, and lives in Brooklyn, New York. A special thanks to Roz Parr.**



McKnight continued from page 17

ously jeopardize federal anti-discrimination legislation). [ILGA, at its annual meeting this summer, ousted NAMBLA.]

Even if you can't stand NAMBLA, you've got to be concerned by the way this thing has played itself out so far. I mean, NAMBLA's membership in ILGA was not a big problem (in fact, in the past ILGA has publicly supported NAMBLA's goal of changing age of consent laws) until the hate-mongers started digging dirt. How happy the homophobes must be with the success of their strategy. They managed to focus public attention away from the broad issue of lesbians and gay men emerging on the global political scene onto a relatively obscure and clearly marginal organization and issue which happens to play perfectly to the stereotype of homosexuals as predatory child molesters. They succeeded in derailing ILGA (at least for the time being), and have gay "leaders" in a tizzy of damage control.

Is anybody but me wondering what these nukes will do for an encore? The mainstream gay attitude seems to be "Well, you have to admit, NAMBLA has almost no support across the movement..." No shit, but nobody seems to care that NAMBLA is not the only group that lacks universal support among queers. Sure, some of the most bitter fights among lesbians and gay men organizing things like marches have been about whether to allow NAMBLA to be a part of the parade. But deliberate and explicit exclusion has also happened

at various times to such "problematic", queers as drag queens, lesbian separatists and practitioners of s/m. How will these folks fare when they make the cover of the rightwing *Lambda Report*?

I'm not trying to reduce the NAMBLA in ILGA issue to "the tent should be big enough for everyone" argument. I realize it's a complex political world and the process of finding the common ground on which we can struggle for common goals is difficult. The strategy of saying "I can't work with you if you're working with them" is important as an option. (In fact, Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, LAGAI, remains virtually alone in its refusal to work with groups or endorse events that include the explicitly and unwaveringly homophobic Revolutionary Communist Party.) But that's not what happened to NAMBLA this time. Their exclusion is a clear capitulation to homophobic pressure from outside the lesbian and gay movement to sell out.

The phenomenon of selling out is as old as political struggle. To me, one of the excruciating realities of being powerless is that once you get into some kind of bargaining position with your oppressor, you are forced to make "concessions" in order to make "progress." (I was recently reminded of the passage of the first federal legislation dealing with AIDS discrimination, where one of the "concessions" was mandatory HIV testing for prisoners.) People doing political work know that the people who get left out are usually those with the least

power to begin with. Lesbian and gay people fighting for social justice know first-hand what it feels like to be kicked out or asked to leave quietly "for the sake of the greater good." It happened to queers in the labor movement and lesbians in the feminist movement, just to name a couple. (We have also been part of coalitions who have not sold us out, like when some civil rights groups have been pressured to drop gays and lesbians from hate crime protections.)

What the NAMBLA-ILGA events have demonstrated (again) is that the broadly-defined lesbian and gay movement is vulnerable to baiting from homophobes pandering to public hate and ignorance. No doubt they will stick with this successful strategy as those who claim to speak for all gay people go for bigger and bigger carrots and we are pressured to appear more and more normal. Lesbian and gay liberationists frustrated by this "divide and conquer" strategy should rather look at pedophilia, child abuse and the overall powerlessness of kids in our society.

**Jennie McKnight writes for *Ultra Violet*, formerly *OUT!*, a paper published by Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention (LAGAI). This article is reprinted from *OUT!*, Vol. IV, Issue #5 with permission from the author. To get on LAGAI's mailing list write to LAGAI/OOC; 3543 18th St. Box 26; San Francisco, CA 94110.**

## AT OUR PRACTICE, NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILIES GET A VERY TRADITIONAL GREETING.



When it comes to women's health, we have a healthy respect for diversity. In fact, we welcome it. The variety of women and families we serve -- both traditional and alternative -- and the wide range of services we can offer a woman at any stage of her life, clearly reflects that.

We offer comprehensive obstetrical, gynecological and midwifery care that includes family planning, pre-natal care, preventive health and menopausal services. If you're looking for a multi-cultural, multi-lingual practice that understands the multi-choices in a woman's life, there's only one way to describe Partners in Women's Health: a welcome idea.

Call us at 617-628-2500 for an appointment or a copy of our brochure. We accept most major health insurance plans.

**PARTNERS IN  
WOMEN'S HEALTH**

109 Commercial Street, Malden, MA 02148 617-397-7821 • 259 Elm Street, Davis Square, Somerville, MA 02144 617-628-2500



Letters continued from page 3

Ultimately unions remain the only vehicle available to empower working people to have a say about issues that affect them such as benefits, pay, working conditions, and job security.

When workers decide to unionize, they are making a decision to become actively involved in all decisions that effect them at work. This means committing time and energy to one's workplace in what can be a difficult and confrontational manner. Groups of lesbian/gay/bi union members exist throughout the country. For more information contact the National Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Transgendered Labor Hotline 617-422-1451.

Harneen Chernow,  
Service Employees International Union Local 285  
Andrea Demajewski,  
Communication Workers of America  
Anne Herbst,  
Service Employees International Union Local 285

#### **Let's Educate Ourselves About Unions and the AIDS Epidemic**

Is unionization good for Aids Service Organizations (ASO's)? How are unions involved in the AIDS crisis? Are ASO's servicing all people with AIDS? A June 1994 GCN article, "AIDS Goes Union," by Raymond L. Rigoglioso raised some criticisms of unionization at ASO's.

Union members, particularly service sector unions, are precisely the populations increasingly affected by the AIDS epidemic. Since insurance coverage and related social services are provided through union plans and negotiated benefits, unions have a direct role in servicing their members' health needs including AIDS-related services. The fastest growing populations within the AIDS epidemic are women and children, people who do not have English as a first language, and people of color. Members of these communities are often represented by service sector unions. Seldom are ASO's located within these communities.

ASO's are often based within the middle class, primarily white, organized gay and lesbian communities. The AIDS epidemic knows no such boundaries. ASO's and the organized gay and lesbian community must be commended for their hard work, dedication, and development of political clout which has brought needed resources to the fight against AIDS. However, they have often segregated themselves from many of the needs of people not like themselves. There is an ever growing rage over the difficulty of access to ASO services by working class people and people of color. There is a connection between these tensions and the unionizing drives at ASO's.

ASO management, like the managers of major corporations, often say that unions are third party outsiders. In his article, Rigoglioso asks, "Does GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) want to be responsible for educating 1199 [the New York Local of the National Health and Hospital Workers Union] and advocating about AIDS issues within the union when it has an epidemic to fight?" What are the assumptions underlying this question? Rigoglioso would have us believe that 1199 has no consciousness or human connection to the AIDS crisis. This ignorant assumption about union involvement in the AIDS crisis is at the core of the problem addressed by ASO service workers across this country who are aggressively trying to unionize. In New York, 1199 was a major labor participant in "United for AIDS Action" a protest organized by GMHC during the National Democratic Convention. Paul Friedman, 1199 Vice President for Organizing, says "We see ourselves as allies with GMHC. We sit on coalitions with them, we march in demonstrations, we get arrested with them."

What about the situation at GMHC? Two years ago GMHC instituted a program called managed growth, which limits the number of new clients GMHC will enroll for service each week. Many staff within GMHC have criticized this program because only the well (or well connected) get in for services. There are horrifying stories of waiting lists, insensitivity, and it taking 4-6 weeks to access urgent services. These backlogs are caused by mismanagement, unfilled staff positions, untrained staff, low staff retention, and supervisors who know more about spin control than management. These are some of the problems that the union organizing drives aim to correct.

While the labor movement struggles to address workplace issues in general, some local unions (although not nearly enough) have been in the forefront of organizing and advocating for benefits and care for members with HIV and AIDS. The Hotel and Restaurant Worker's Unions in Boston and San Francisco have been leaders in the battles for rights of people with HIV in the workplace. These unions have fought for and successfully bargained for special HIV cash benefits for people who need financial assistance for rent, food, and drug trials. They have led the fight to get insurance companies to accept domestic partnership benefits, and have been successful in securing coverage for non-traditional medical treatment such as acupuncture, homeopathy, and herbal remedies. They have forced insurance companies to allow compassionate allocation of home health care workers, as well as other treatments needed by many AIDS patients. They have formed comprehensive case-management programs that advocate for individual members' rights within government institutions, hospital bureaucracies, greedy insurance companies, and yes, even ASO's.

ASO's must realize that many unions have historically been in the forefront of

civil rights and gay rights struggles. Unions are a part, and always have been, of the broad coalition of people fighting the AIDS epidemic. Our members are living with AIDS and dying from it. Unions and ASO's should be partners in these fights. ASO's resistance to unionization is tied to their separation from hourly workers and communities of color. ASO management and boards are often well-educated, affluent, white power-brokers making decisions and assumptions about unions that are not based in reality. Unions have fought in national and local coalitions to influence state and local governments to change HUD regulations to include AIDS as a disability. They have also been involved in the struggle to secure funding for treatment, research, and service organizations.

In Boston, the AIDS Action Committee has a reputation for long waiting periods for services, and a maze of paperwork and appointments that discourage many working class people who have been failed by similar bureaucracies in the past. The Boston Aids Action Committee (AAC) does run workshops that include gay African-Americans, Latinos, and other people of color. However, the AAC has not been willing to reach beyond this. A willingness to work with unions and other community organizations would help address the prejudices against AIDS which keep many poor and working class people with AIDS isolated, discriminated against, and living in fear.

Andre Curtis is a gay African American with AIDS. He was a cook at the Sheraton Boston hotel and a shop steward in Local 26, the Boston Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union. He is currently the longest housing tenant (7 years) in a building owned and operated by the AIDS Action Committee. Yet Andre was informed he would not be welcome in a new state-of-the-art house being opened in its place. Andre is suing Aids Action based on their lack of a tenant selection process (fair housing standard) as well as race discrimination. This lawsuit is being funded by his union, which plans on obtaining records and information on the demographics of the AIDS Action client base in order to get an accurate picture of who, exactly, they have been servicing all these years. Like many others, it would be difficult for Andre, without his union standing with him, to challenge the careerist ASO managers who make decisions by personality, that have life or death impact on their clients. Important questions remain.

Why is ASO management so afraid of unions? The answer lies at the heart of what a unionized workplace would mean: workers with a voice in how the organization is run, and a say in decisions of how and to whom services are administered. In GMHC's case, why is the organization holding \$4 million in T-bills, while keeping staff positions unfilled? With a union in place, management would be held accountable. More power in the hands of the ASO workers would mean breaking open the sanctuary of tidy groups of clients that resemble the boards themselves and force them to service the people who look more like the workers, the union members.

Janice Loux is the Vice - President and Benefits Officer of Local 26, Boston Hotel Workers Union.

#### **CLASS AND THE GAY COMMUNITY: WHO WILL SPEAK FOR US?**

The appearance of the "AIDS Goes Union" article in the last issue of Gay Community News (GCN) demonstrates the depths to which our collective community consciousness has dropped with regard to issues of labor and economic justice. Although the author probably set out to be fair and even-handed, he ended up buying into many of the anti-union stereotypes promoted by anti-union employers and the right wing in this country.

We won't go into the article's particulars but instead we want to express concern about more fundamental issues surrounding the rights of workers in our society, the ramifications of our failure to embrace economic justice within our community and on the relationship between the lesbian/gay movement and the movements of women, working people and communities of color. Today, mainstream gay politics has become an increasingly hostile place for many of us. Political developments in Massachusetts over the past few years illustrate this point. It is no wonder that progressive arenas within the lesbian and gay community are also backsliding in their commitment to the whole community.

Some might question what debates about unions and class issues have to do with gay and lesbian liberation. But working class lesbians and gay men would never ask that question. Or people of color, for that matter, when the question is race. Because class (or race) is inescapable, and we are constantly reminded of the connections in our lives.

Middle class assumptions are a powerful obstacle. One of those assumptions is that if you choose to ignore something, or avoid taking a position, that you are remaining neutral and above the fray. Guess again. This is a class bias that has its roots in being accustomed to having a certain amount of access or advantages that many others do not have.

In Massachusetts, right wing politics and unabashed class snobbery taking the form of "politics" have reached new heights. Under Republican governor William Weld, *The Advocate* magazine's designated "hetero hero," conservative Republicans have championed a wave of mean spirited politics which by definition have excluded and harmed major portions of our community and the working people of our state.

Women's and gay groups are credited with giving Weld the edge over Silber [Ed. note — John Silber was the conservative Democratic party nominee in the



1990 gubernatorial race, known for racist and homophobic views] in a very tight race, due to Weld's stated pro-choice and pro-gay rights positions.

Since taking office, Weld has cultivated a pro-gay image (and that's what it is folks: image) and has won over some key leaders in the community. We've been treated to fine sounding pro-gay proclamations and there have been highly publicized gay appointments to state positions, but these have been almost exclusively conservative gay men, with an occasional political moderate thrown in for good measure — hardly a compelling reason for lesbians, working class people, people of color, and people with AIDS to feel a kinship with Bill Weld.

Bill Weld has been cruel to PEOPLE WITH AIDS by slashing Medicaid and general relief, on which many depend for survival. AIDS activists have publicly exposed this hypocrisy. But many community leaders have remained silent.

Weld "gave" domestic partner benefits to managers in state government. It cost him nothing and won him friends among some middle class gays who don't realize that an extra benefit for them is a desperate need for working class gays who still don't have decent health care for themselves or their partners. We cringe when so-called gay leaders stand on the same stage with this governor while he bashes working people and people of color — gay, lesbian and straight.

While a coalition strategy has been under fire from conservative white gay men for some time, building coalitions with other social movements for justice and equality remains essential. This should include the union movement where, by the way, lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are asserting their power as never before and being heard. Workplace contracts fought for and negotiated by progressive unions were the first places to secure anti-discrimination protection and domestic partner benefits — before "gay rights" was a glimmer in Bill Weld's eye.

These days, the political initiative and media spotlight seem to belong to conservative spokesmen who claim to be the mainstream of our community. They're not. They profess "pragmatic" single issue politics and claim that they alone are in touch with the real world. There's nothing wrong with a little pragmatism, but there are pragmatists and then there are pragmatists who do not stand on any principle at all.

The conservative wing of our community has left the majority of lesbians and gay men to fend for ourselves, and the progressive wing of the lesbian and gay movement has lost much of its voice. This voice is further weakened and divided when progressives in our community buy into anti-union and anti-working class myths.

Class, race, gender, health status are the daily facts of our lives, not side issues. When Governor Weld cuts Medicare benefits, "reforms" welfare out of existence, or lays off social service workers; working class gay men, lesbians, our friends and families are injured. When wealthy white gay men publicly behave as if, except for this one thing, they could fit right in at the country club, we know that's certainly not true for the rest of us.

And when GCN, one of these precious few voices for progressive lesbians and gay men, features an article that analyzes the pros and cons for gay workers (as if these working class organizations, imperfect as they may be, are now something we could just take or leave), we are compelled to respond. We hope the exchange taking place now, provoked by the "AIDS Goes Union" piece, will serve to enlighten a great many more people in the community about unions and that other peculiar thing in our community: class.

Ed Hunt  
Karen Wheeler

Susie Day continued from 9

HER: Don't you think there's a difference between pornography and erotica?

ME: There, in a damp, shadowy corner, you order five of your best dancing girls from your stable of "Sassy Lassy Cowboys" to strap lavender schlongs to their g-strings and "have their way" with me. After all, nobody ever had an orgasm while contemplating equality, did they?

HER: Thomas Jefferson did.

ME: And we see the unfortunate results of that. Meanwhile, somebody in the bar has put "We Are Fa-mi-ly!" on the jukebox, and as the music throbs relentlessly, the Lassies take turns driving their hot latex meat into my loveholes. Again, I explode in... No, I scream with ... uh —

HER: What?

ME: I don't know, but a lot of it. Then you heat up your branding iron and press your steaming metal into my sweat-covered flank. Your mark is there for all to see: "Multiple O Ranch." We exchange clit rings. You leave. I never see you again. [Sighing, I look off wistfully.] I could handle that kind of commitment.

HER: [Taking off the hood; tremulously] I'm scared. Can I have a hug?

ME: You don't get it, do you? Nice girls come last. IF they come at all, OK?

HER: [Exasperated, she hurls her tea mug against a k.d. lang poster. Special blend of Red Zinger and Almond Sunset trickles down the wall.] Oh, be QUIET. Just shut UP!

ME: [Startled; intrigued.] Pardon?

HER: I have had it with your stupid, self-indulgent need for sexual status. Do you know how pathetic you sound? How afraid of real human contact? You are disgusting!

ME: Yes, oh ye-s-s-s. Ooooh, Baby. [Seeing a new, masterful side of her, I move toward her on the couch, breathing quickly, heavily.] Did anybody ever tell you you have eyes like Alix Dobkin?

HER: [Retreats, pacing.] You're nothing but an orgasm junkie! Why — why, you're just like a [pause] ma-a-a-n.

ME: That's it! [Dropping the notebook, I throw myself on the couch.] More ... ahhh.... A little to the left.

HER: Left? And what about your politics? "Step over this homeless person and into my 20-million-dollar virtual reality machine?" — is that what you want? "I'll be Nicaragua; you be the Contras"?

ME: [By now, writhing on the couch.] Oh baby, your Birkenstocks are really turning me ON...

HER: That's all. [Grabbing her jacket, she heads toward the door.] I feel just as disrespected now for not being sexual enough, as I was in the 70's for having the wrong kind of sex! Well, guess what — I hate veggies and rice! And I hate you! Goodbye! [The door slams; she's gone.]

ME: Come on, honey.. Put a condom on my flute. We can pretend it's Kay Gardner's. Please, oh — [Sitting up; looking at my watch, I realize what's happened.] That was the best love I've ever had in 49 seconds. [Pause.] I wonder why I always fall for the unavailable ones? Oh well. At least I have my Art. [Retrieving my notebook, I begin composing aloud as the curtain falls.] "Scene: My living room. My date and I have just finished eating. 'Darling,' she says..."

Susie Day is a writer living in New York City.

	<p><b>MAN TALK</b> THROBING ACTION HOT PHONE SEX FOR THE GAY 90'S <b>1-900-745-3306</b> FOR MORE GAY ACTION CALL <b>1-800-863-2269</b></p>	
<p><b>GAY CHAT</b> BATH HOUSE J/O ORGY CALL AND JOIN IN OR JUST EAVESDROP <b>1-900-745-1843</b> MORE GAY PHONE SEX AT <b>1-900-745-1581</b></p>		<p><b>MALE CALL</b> THOUSANDS OF MESSAGES JOCKS • LEATHERMEN TOP OR BOTTOM YOU NAME IT WE GOTTEM <b>1-900-745-1556</b> \$2.99/MINUTE • 18-YEARS</p>

## The Elizabeth Stone House

Feminist mental health, battered women, and transitional housing program seeks full time (32 hours per week) direct service advocating. Work involves advocating for women and families in 18-month transitional housing program. Job requires knowledge of mental health issues, strong advocacy and limit-setting skills, ability to work independently as well as part of a team. Tasks include general program administration as well as facilitation of group meetings, limited evening and emergency on-call coverage, and crisis intervention. We hire for life experience. Second language a plus. Out lesbians of color strongly encouraged to apply. Starting salary \$29,355, non-negotiable; excellent benefits. No phone calls please. Cover letters and resumes to: Hiring Committee, Elizabeth Stone House, Box 59, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.



**Boston City Hospital salutes 25 years of pride.**



## **Comprehensive healthcare services.**

Respectfully provided.

### **PATIENT SERVICES**

Adult Primary Care	534-5951
AIDS/HIV Clinic	534-4290
Alcohol Clinic	534-4212
Evening Clinic (5-9 P.M., by appointment)	534-4865
Latino Clinic	534-4489
Oncology Clinic	534-4290
Public Health (STD)	534-4081

### **WOMEN'S CENTER**

OB/GYN	534-4893
Oncology (GYN)	534-4161

### **EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Adult	534-4075
Pediatric	534-4991

### **DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

Addiction Services	534-5176
AIDS Services	534-4559
Social Services	534-5451



**BOSTON**  
CITY  
HOSPITAL

*We care for Boston.*

At Massachusetts and Harrison Avenues 534-5000

*Thomas M. Menard, Mayor Lawrence A. Dwyer, Commissioner*